No turkeys for Pilgrims
PAGE 7

Indifferent Citizens
PAGE 6

Stones
PAGE 10

Dec09
LIBRARY REDEEMER COLLEGE
777 GARNER RD E
ANCASTER ON L9K 1J4

Toronto International Film Festival
PAGE 20

PM#40009999 R9375

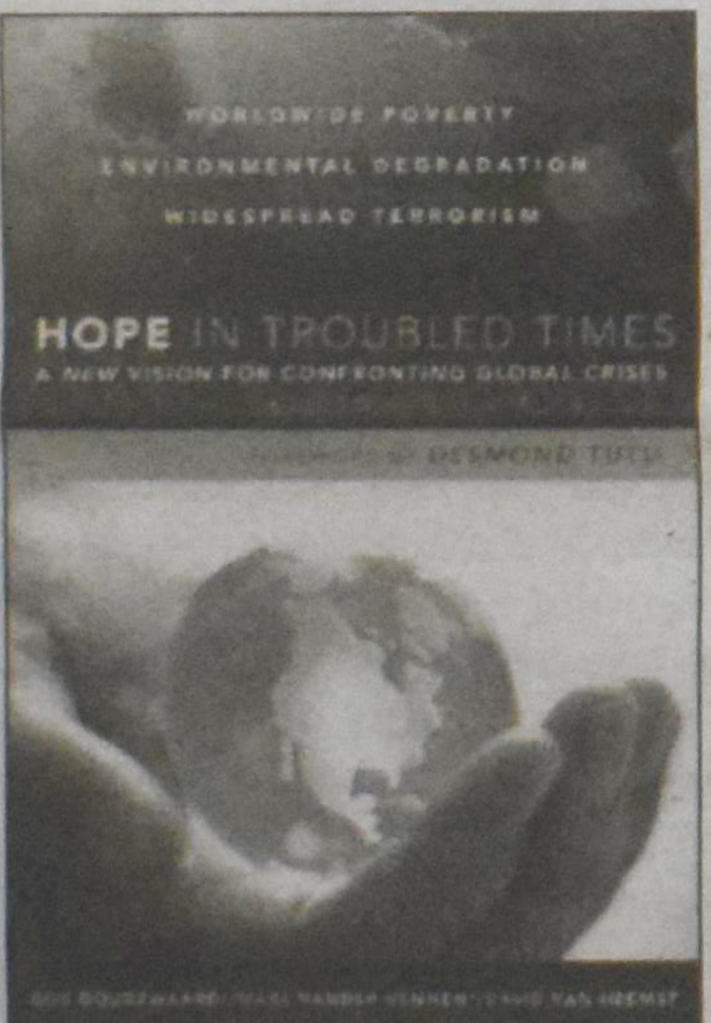
A Reformed Biweekly | 64th Year of Publication October 12, 2009 | NO. 2874 | $2.00

CHRISTIAN COURIER

REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LIBRARY
CHRISTIAN COURIER
PER/BX/9401/.C36
OCT 15 2009

How to sling a stone called 'hope'

A conversation with Mark Vander Vennen on facing global crises



Bob Goudzwaard, David Van Heemst and Mark Vander Vennen co-authored Hope in Troubled Times, *with a foreword by Desmond Tutu.*

Angela Reitsma Bick (CC): *Hope in Troubled Times* came out in 2007, saying that "the instruments that steer the real economy are by nature unstable and unreliable pilots" (23). That struck me as perceptive, in light of the economic downturn. Has this recession affected our society's glorification of economic growth?

Mark Vander Vennen: I think the recession has provided a golden opportunity for society to really look at those deeper questions – what's important in life and what do we truly value – and my fear is that we have not been seizing that opportunity.

The word portrayed in the media is that the recession is basically over. But in my view we've reconstructed or resurrected the unstable patterns that led to the crisis in the first place, where the so-called real economy of goods and services serves the financial markets, rather than the other way around. So there's a false sense of security in relation to the economy. The language is that the recession is now over, but what many more people are experiencing in their day-to-day lives isn't over. There's a disconnect there. To me, the questions we need to discuss as a society have to do with "What kind of economy do we want?" and "How can we have an economy that enables and supports the life of all and the life of the environment?" rather than maximum wealth for the self-interested – the so-called driver of the economy.

CC: The thesis of *Hope* seems to be that we are in a crisis, and too many diagnoses of that crisis lack a spiritual or religious dimension. Is that right?

Vander Vennen: What motivated the book was a sense that almost all descriptions of the current problems, and especially the prescriptions or solutions to the current problems, lack a kind of deeper, spiritual religious dimension that we believe is profoundly embedded within the current reality. The degree to which that aspect is ignored is the degree to which we can't actually grapple with and help to turn around the really significant crises of our time.

CC: Do you hear anyone else making the same argument?

Vander Vennen: I think so, yes. There definitely are people who understand and speak to that deeper dimension. One who has been courageous in that respect is Pope Benedict. He put out, just at the crucial moment of a recent G8 meeting, a powerful statement about the economy and our God-given calling to have an economy that serves others and our neighbours.

CC: Was that [the encyclical] *Caritas in Veritate*?

Vander Vennen: Yes. That didn't get the air space that the prevailing economic wisdom does. There are some wonderful alternative movements happening – different ways of measuring health and well-being, for example.

CC: Tell me if I understood this correctly: the US and its allies depend on other countries for the resources that fuel our high quality of life in the West, something you call resource vulnerability (134). Does that mean there's no incentive to help developing nations because doing so will ultimately impoverish us?

Continued on page 2

Sonnet

after Jane Kenyon & Psalm 96

Let every planet follow its orbit
Let the prevailing winds blow where they please
across the water   May the moon move seas
in tides   high on the Bay of Fundy   It
is not within our strength to make it quit
Let every lake reflect all that it sees
so paths of light will shimmer   May the trees
reach skyward   & every flower submit
to its own blooming   May all on the earth
cycle down paths that follow their calling
like migratory birds' instinctive ways
Let rain & snow give in to their falling
& babies in the womb to their own birth
But mostly   may this all be done as praise

D.S. Martin

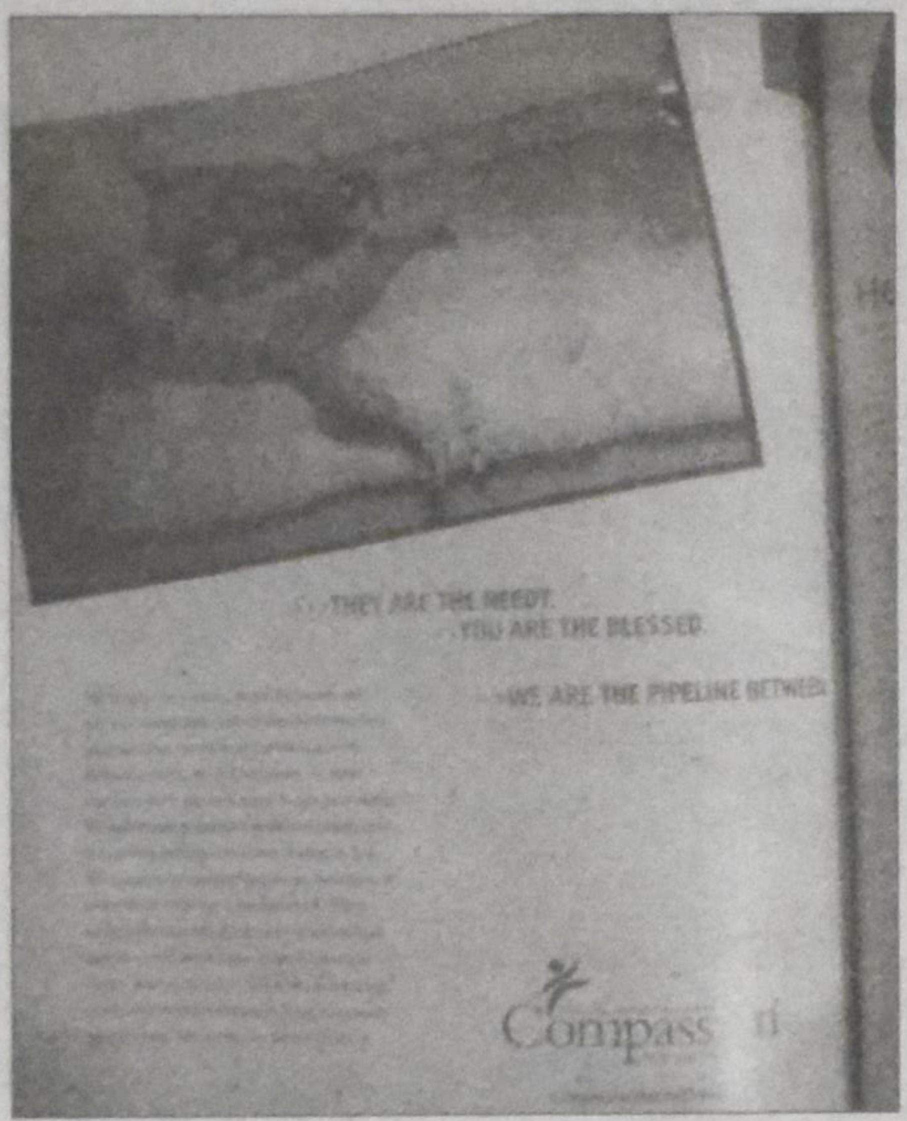
The poem "Sonnet" by D.S. Martin was taken from Poiema, Wipf & Stock (2008) available at www.dsmartin.ca Used with permission. Poiema was among the winners at the Canadian Christian Writing Awards this year. D.S. Martin will be reading at Faith Family books (Toronto) on November 20, 2009.

News

How to sling a stone called 'hope' *continued*

Vander Vennen: The type of help is the crucial issue. The type of help that impoverished nations need has to do with becoming sustainable economies and making their own decisions, and not being beholden to things like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) because of exorbitant and crushing debts. In that way, yes – they have a vested interest in not helping those economies thrive, because that could threaten access to increasingly scarce resources that the wealthy nations need to keep their engines going. In that way, I would agree. Too often the purpose of investment is to enrich the North and very select groups in the South. There's a form of charity: when floods happen, or natural disasters, the modus operandi for support involves aid in times of crisis. But it's aid that does not affect or address the fundamental structures of the economic relationships between the nations. And so it allows the status quo to carry on, which is an unjust status quo.

CC: "The rich need the poor to enhance their own self-esteem" (83). When I read that, I immediately thought of this advertisement. What do you see in it?



Vander Vennen: It's a ghastly advertisement. There's no sense of how this [aid] has an impact on the local economies, and of how it creates a sense of dependence as opposed to independence.

I heard a story once from John McKnight, a story about an African American pastor who ran a very successful soup kitchen in an inner-city in the US. Then in his sermon preparation he came upon Jesus' statement that it's more blessed to give than to receive. It hit him – he says he felt God was talking to him directly. It's more blessed to give than to receive! After reflecting on that phrase, they ended up restructuring their soup kitchen so that it was the street people who served and delivered soup to the church people. They found out that some of the street people had been chefs, and so that story came to my mind when I saw that ad.

If we looked more closely at what our neighbours really need and want, we'd give in a much different way – more of a servanthood way, a way that walks alongside them.

CC: The book demonstrates quite clearly that the West has made idols of the forces that lead to unending material progress and prosperity. Are Christians any more aware of this than the average person?

Vander Vennen: In principle, we have the capacity to be very aware, because we have Scripture and we confess that Jesus is Lord. So we have a long-standing faith that tries to be alert to those things in its best moments. But it's really hard for me to say, and I don't want to make a value judgement. We have to guard against a sense that we have an inside line to what's best. I certainly know some Muslim people who are much more alert to this than a number of Christian friends I know.

CC: I like your point that the spiritual battle takes place within every heart.

Vander Vennen: I *really* believe that.

CC: In a book called *Hope in Troubled Times*, you spend about 170 pages outlining the troubled times, and only 35 pages on hope. Wouldn't it have been more helpful to illustrate this "new vision" for our current crises in a bit more detail?

Vander Vennen: We didn't want to end up with a list of "to-do's" or "how-to's" in terms of implementation. There's a philosophical reason for that, and it has to do with the nature of change, the nature of hope and the nature of faith. For us, it has to do with taking steps in faith. When you take a step in faith, you don't know what the outcome will be. This is unlike the ideologies, which are goal- and future-oriented, working backwards from a predetermined absolute end towards us. But instead of a blueprint for the future, steps in faith involve taking a step in the present towards justice and peace and shalom and environmental integrity and human dignity and having faith, trusting that God will then open up what the next step will look like. And then taking that next step, and having the same experience happen.

I do hope that we give a vision for what that could look like, and we end up with a very concrete suggestion for the IMF to help re-balance and restructure the international monetary system. Not long ago, British Prime Minister Gordon Brown struck a study group to study specifically that proposal, taken from the book.

Pope Benedict

CC: Yes, I remember the suggestion: that the IMF issue a new and legal currency to relieve the world's most indebted countries. Where did the proposal come from?

Vander Vennen: From Bob Goudzwaard. It's an indication that proposals can happen in a spirit of hope that do get the attention of decision makers, and do have a kind of political realism.

CC: You call "hope" a suitable stone to sling at the enemies that threaten to dominate us, from without (powerful ideologies of our time) and within (stubbornness of human heart, unwillingness to change ourselves). Where should we aim the small stone called "hope" right now?

Vander Vennen: David aimed that stone at a vulnerable spot on a giant who was terrorizing God's people. I would say we want to aim that stone at the vulnerable spots of the giants who are threatening all of God's people around the world. That means aiming at vulnerabilities in the present ways of doing things. People do have a sense that the way we're running our lives in terms of global impacts doesn't really add up to what is meaningful in terms of being human. So we want to ask those kinds of questions: doesn't it make more sense to structure our economies and our politics and our social policies in ways that support life? I think that's what's missing from the current debate, which comes back to why we wanted to write this book.

There's only so long that we can pillage the earth and suppress the poor before something will give. These are God-given invitations to grapple with things as they are and try to participate in turning them around in a more sustainable direction.

CC: Amen!

Hope in Troubled Times was a collaboration between Bob Goudzwaard, professor emeritus of the Free University of Amsterdam; David Van Heemst of Olivet Nazarene University; and Mark Vander Vennen, Executive Director of Shalem Mental Health Network. CC spoke to Vander Vennen at his home in Cobourg, Ontario.

Justifying war with the just-war theory

CC: Can you give any examples of the failure of the just-war theory today? Or, as you call it, the "permissions debate"?

Vander Vennen: The Iraq war and the Afghanistan war. Rather than take a systemic view, we always start with individual conflicts, and we very narrowly ask, "Are we morally obligated to be involved in this conflict by taking up arms or not?" That's the permission question. If we say yes, perhaps we become militarily engaged in the conflict. This is an extremely narrow approach to the issue of conflict, and it bypasses the fundamental questions about the nature of human conflict and the history of conflict between nations and people. It provides us with an illusion of completeness or exhaustiveness – whereas in fact we haven't even asked the most basic questions. As a result, our solutions tend to be very single-minded, and they exacerbate rather than solve issues.

That is very definitely the case in Afghanistan. The US military alone spends $100 million a day there, and that's entirely a military conflict-solution. All of the international aid development support to Afghanistan adds up to about $7 million a day. That is a failure of the current approach, when clearly if we could reverse that ratio, so many different types of things could be happening. The "permission question" approach bypasses altogether the local capacities for peace that exist in every conflict, and have existed in Afghanistan since the beginning of the conflict. The question also ignores great successes in the area of peace-building and conflict transformation over the past 25 years, for example, which tend to be ignored in the media.

News

Redeemer partners with local club to build soccer dome

(L to R) Fred Eisenberger, Mayor of Hamilton; Hon. Ted McMeekin, local MPP; Justin Cooper, Redeemer President; Axel Hiemstra, Redeemer Varsity Soccer; Rachel Webber, Ancaster Soccer Club; Jim Bethune, Ancaster Soccer Club; Lloyd Ferguson, local Councillor; and David Sweet, local MP.

Marian Van Til, *with files from RUC*

ANCASTER, Ont. – Redeemer University College will receive one million dollars in government money to build a shared-use soccer facility at the college. Redeemer will share the facility with the Ancaster Soccer Club (ASC).

David Sweet, MP for Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale, and MPP Ted McMeekin, Minister of Consumer Services, helped procure the money, which will come from both the Recreational Infrastructure Canada Program in Ontario (RInC Ontario) and the Ontario Recreation Program (Ontario REC). The city of Hamilton is also looking for ways to support the project.

The field will be covered with artificial turf, and a temporary fabric from November to April, allowing year-long use. A field house, including change rooms and a concession area, will be built adjacent to the field.

The facility will be operated under a shared-use agreement that will allow ASC and other community groups to have majority access. Dr. Justin Cooper, President of Redeemer University College, said, "This arrangement will give all members of the community access to high-quality facilities while allowing us to better serve our students." Jim Bethune, President of the Ancaster Soccer Club, agreed. "We are pleased to partner with Redeemer to bring this world-class facility to our community, where it will serve more than 25,000 soccer players," he said.

The arrangement was praised by government officials. MP David Sweet noted that the increased capacity for soccer that the project creates "will benefit players from Stoney Creek to Brantford." Minister McMeekin said that the agreement is an excellent example of different groups "partnering together for a stronger, healthier community."

ASC and Redeemer will both work to raise remaining funds needed to complete the project. Construction will begin once those funds are in place.

Newspapers: an endangered species?

Principalities & Powers

David T. Koyzis

When I was a child, the Chicago area had four major daily newspapers: the *Tribune*, *Daily News*, *Sun-Times* and *American*. *The Trib*, as everyone called it, was *the* major daily in the Midwest, under its famous publisher Col. Robert McCormick, who had vigorously campaigned on its editorial pages against American entry into the Second World War. It had a conservative isolationist flavour, and it became notorious for its gun-jumping 1948 headline erroneously proclaiming Thomas Dewey's electoral victory over President Harry Truman. *The Trib* was a morning paper.

Our family subscribed to the *Daily News*, an afternoon paper with a more progressive image. It was one of the first American dailies to open a foreign bureau in 1898, and it became known for its Pulitzer Prize-winning writing.

The *Sun-Times* was a good quality tabloid that was published in the morning, appealing largely to blue-collar readers. The *American* was read by my aunt and uncle who lived in the city. An afternoon paper, it became a tabloid in 1970, briefly changing its name to *Chicago Today*.

The afternoon papers were the first to go in the 1970s, having been defeated by their principal competition – the automobile and television news. It seems more people preferred to read a paper at breakfast than at dinner. With more people using the new expressways, there were fewer rail commuters to purchase a paper on their way back to the suburbs. Once home, a comfortable armchair and the world on the small screen awaited them.

Today only the *Trib* and the *Sun-Times* remain in business, but even their future is in doubt. Recently the *Trib* converted from a broadsheet to a newsstand tabloid and considerably dumbed down its contents. Both papers have filed for bankruptcy in the last year. What happened?

Too much non-print competition

Quite simply, the nature of the competition has changed since the 1980s. No longer are newspapers competing with television; they are now competing with the Internet and the easy availability of free news from all over the world. Ironically it is the newspapers themselves that have facilitated this competition. Why buy a hard copy of the *Globe and Mail* if you can read most of its contents online? Similarly, why depend on the CBC's judgement as to what is newsworthy when you can set your own editorial agenda through a customized version of Google news? The dissemination of information has been radically democratized such that we need no longer rely on a screening agent in the form of a professional editorial board.

Of course the bulk of a paper's revenues come from advertising, which applies to both print and web editions. Paid subscriptions as a proportion of total income have diminished over the years. To cut costs, some papers are considering shifting entirely to the web, as the venerable *Christian Science Monitor* did this year. Here in Canada the *Western Standard* became web-only two years ago. This may spell the future for many of North America's newspapers, if they are to survive.

Those that keep up the *printed* page will have to find a unique and irreplaceable niche for themselves, conscious that there are still many people out there who prefer to hold something in their hands rather than to stare at a screen. It will not be enough to report the news, which can be had readily elsewhere. From now on the successful periodical will have to offer something fresh and irreplaceable.

Christian Courier has recently upgraded its layout and added new writers. Now it must show readers in a distinctive way what it means to live as the people of God in a new millennium.

David T. Koyzis (david.t.koyzis@hotmail.com) teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario, and is in his 20th year as a columnist for this paper.

MOBILE POLAROIDS

Born in Taipei in 1984, Annie Ling is a Canadian artist and documentarian. This photo is part of a portfolio, Mobile Polaroids, currently on exhibit at Redeemer's Art Gallery until October 29, 2009.

OBERAMMERGAU TOURS 2010

We are pleased to offer a variety of tours to Oberammergau.

Departure	Tour Host
May 18	Dr.Bill Mundt
May 25	John DeSchiffart
June 22	Rev.David Sherbino
June 29	Rev.John Klomps
July 06	Rev.Mike Sherbino
August 31	Rev.George Anderson
Sept.21	Earl Clint

These tours offer a variety of itineraries and are handled by the Aurora office. For tour details visit our website at: www.verstraetetravel.com

AMSTERDAM FLIGHTS 2009

Martinair has stopped flying from Canada.
We can offer you charter flights on ***Air Transat*** as well as ***KLM Royal Dutch Airlines***.
Contact the St.Catharines office for a competitive quote.

Shop and book online www.verstraetetravel.com

VERSTRAETE TRAVEL & CRUISES
36 Secord Drive, St.Catharines ON L2N 1K8
Tel.**905 934-4414** or long distance **1800 405-6088**
email: niagara@verstraete.com

Editorials

Rediscovering thanks and giving

Brett Alan Dewing

I think we would all agree that Thanksgiving as a mandated holiday does not preclude living a life of daily thanks and daily giving. On the contrary, setting aside a state-acknowledged day of gratitude is a way of reminding us of the value and virtue of the act of thanking. It is also a call to examine our own quiet rituals of thanksgiving, illuminated as they are by a far more obvious version.

A new thanksgiving

A month ago, I moved to Vancouver. I am an east coast kind of guy, and while I have visited BC in the past, my heart lies in Hamilton, Ontario. Outside of Hamilton, the beauty of Halifax and New Brunswick has staked its claim on me, and Winnipeg's residents have seduced me with their community; I have envisioned myself living in these locales, but I never thought I'd end up on the Pacific Ocean.

The move has not been a fully comfortable experience. Life in Vancouver is a different beast than life in Ontario. The architecture, the populace, and the climate daily remind me that I am, in the words of Dorothy, not in Kansas anymore. I am here as an unpaid intern with Living Waters Canada, and my survival is dependent on the donations of others. This in itself is a huge adjustment. I have had to leave my 12-year-old cat, and that, too, has been hard.

All of that is to say that I was made aware of the things I had left behind and how thankful I have been for them throughout my life. Living on around $1300 a month has likewise made me realize how thankful I am for the luxuries I have been used to in the past. These days, every meal is a true time of thanksgiving. Every donation from a friend or acquaintance brings an honest expression of gratitude. My feeble thank yous throughout my life now seem hollow and shallow. In short, I am being made thankful in a new way.

What are we thankful for?

As North Americans, our experience of affluence has made us somewhat numb when it comes to being grateful. Even my current state, which can feel like destitution, is an enviable blessing of abundance.

We've heard the sermons, seen the commercials, and read the pamphlets. We are all aware of our relative wealth and our ability to help the world's hurting. And many of us do, in amazing ways. But we will never truly be able to feel the truth of our situation, precisely because it is our situation and the situation of everyone we know.

And yet, in some way, we are bound to try. We are obliged to keep reaching for an objective perspective, for a vision of our abundance in a world of poverty. Perhaps we are worn out by our duty to share the wealth. There is always another letter from another charity at our door. There is always another wrenching speaker from another wonderful organization at our church. There is always another event for another worthy cause on our calendar.

And financial generosity is only the beginning. We are constantly confronted with claims on our time and energy, our creativity and our empathy. It is exhausting to be a perpetual volunteer. It is deadening to be constantly churning out work for the benefit of someone else. It is disheartening to feel the pain of the world.

How then shall we live?

How can we live in this tension without becoming, well, tense?

If you're expecting the answer to lie in this paragraph, I'm afraid you won't be quite as thankful as you may wish to be. These are complex problems, and I suspect their answers are even more so. However, there is one simple – but not easy – thing we can remember this Thanksgiving.

We are not on our own. And, to throw in a second related reminder, our resources are not ours. We have the privilege of being stewards of God's creation. And, don't forget, those starving children that pull at your heart and purse strings have the same glorious office. We are united in our duty to see the Kingdom come.

We may not know what that kingdom looks like or how to pave its way, but we aren't the masterminds in this scheme. Stewards have access to their boss. We are not expected to run a tight ship on a drowning boat. We are, however, called on to follow the captain's orders.

And so I hope that this Thanksgiving you are able to re-experience the desperate kind of gratitude we all owe to God and others. I hope, too, that you are blessed to be a blessing to your fellows and to accept their thanks gracefully. But I also pray that you may seek God's lead in both instances. He is bigger than the economy and more powerful than the world's brokenness. And he delights in directing (and rewarding) his stewards.

Christian Courier

Founded in 1945

An independent bimonthly that seeks to: report on significant events in the Christian community and the rest of the world; express opinions infused by Scripture and rooted in a reformed perspective; provide contact for the Christian community.

EDITORIAL TEAM & PRODUCTION STAFF

Op-Ed Editor: Bert Witvoet **bert.witvoet@sympatico.ca**
News Editor: Angela Reitsma Bick **angela@christiancourier.ca**
Feature Editor: Brett Alan Dewing **brett@christiancourier.ca**
Church Page Editor: Marion Van Til **marianvantil@roadrunner.com**
Contributing Editor: Peter Schuurman **eternalstudent@sympatico.ca**
Circulation/Fam.ads: Rose der Nederlanden **rose@christiancourier.ca**
Admin/Bus.ads/Web: Ineke Medcalf-Strayer **ads@christiancourier.ca**

The publication of comments, opinions or advertising does not imply agreement or endorsement by *Christian Courier* or the publisher. Please contact circulation if you cannot afford the subscription price but want to receive *Christian Courier*.

Christian Courier
5 Joanna Dr, St. Catharines ON L2N 1V1
Tel: (905) 682-8311; 1-800-969-4838
Web site: www.christiancourier.ca
Publications Mail Registration No. 09375

We acknowledge the assistance of the Government of Canada, through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

Canada

Full-time JK caters to no-time parents

Angela Reitsma Bick

It's hard to imagine a kid more enthusiastic about Junior Kindergarten than our four-year-old. After only two weeks, she'd marked every upcoming school day on a recycled pocket calendar, not stopping until August 2010 where the pages ran out. When we explained summer holidays, she reluctantly changed her notation system to include little tents instead of schools. She's not overly talkative about events at school, but on the five days she's home each week, little stories slip out. "There wasn't enough time to finish a peach at lunch." "Another boy got to be first in line but soon it might be my turn." "The teacher read a story about dogs going to school." I am riveted by these glimpses into her new and independent life.

No matter how much she loves it, however, I don't wish she could go to school more. Two days a week seem just about right. Nonetheless, if Dalton McGuinty keeps his word, four- and five-year olds in Ontario will be in school five full days a week by 2010.

Two years ago, McGuinty's government promised funds of over $500 million to implement the shift to full-time kindergarten, although rumours suggest that the recession might delay the transition. An emphasis on math and language skills, the premier states, will make these young students "more proficient throughout their school years."

On September 1, British Columbia's government released a budget that included $151 million to implement full-time kindergarten in that province, also by 2010.

Even though Christian schools needn't follow the proposed changes in public schools, principals may think it's best to remain competitive. "Those JK kids are like sponges," I heard one Christian school principal say recently. In other words: the more you get into that sponge now, the better.

Taking a closer look

I disagree. While it's true that four- and five-year olds have an enormous capacity to learn, school is not necessarily the best place to teach them. At such a young age, children thrive on a low child-to-adult ratio, which allows for more verbal interaction. A schedule is helpful, but it shouldn't trump the shifting needs of each child – and being at home makes much more room for that than school does. Finally, early years together help to build a strong relationship between parents and children. The most famous Proverb about child-rearing is directed primarily at parents: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (22:6). Instead of tackling the training ourselves, however, we're being encouraged to hire others to do it for us, just like using Supernanny to solve our discipline problems.

The motive behind this increase is what really bothers me. Do we truly think ten extra months of math and language instruction will create lifelong A-students who go on to get higher-paying jobs than the old-fashioned JKs? No. The push for full-time kindergarten is just another version of the national daycare debate. In other words, it's because we are too focused on our jobs, high-paying or not. It's much easier to arrange most work schedules around five days, not two. Public school is free (although taxes may increase), but daycare is not. For any family with two working parents, full-time kindergarten is undoubtedly less complicated than the current system. But let's just be clear about one thing. The provincial governments in BC and Ontario are not doing this to boost elementary test scores. They're doing it because our culture accommodates families with two working adults and doesn't do much to encourage parents to stay at home and take care of their own kids.

I think those little JK sponges should ease into school – after all, they'll spend at least twelve more years there. I want my daughter home for those in-between-days, so I can catch those story snippets, so she can play with her younger sister, so she can rest a little. If the discussion regarding full-time kindergarten continues, then I hope at least politicians, parents and school administrators will be honest: it's not out of concern for our children's early development, but our own convenience.

Letters

Calvinism teaches respect

"Last month we asked, In the light of recent articles about the re-emergence of Calvinism, how do you see Calvinism? Do you value the Calvinist heritage? How has Calvinism influenced your life?" We received the following historical account with a personal note at the end.

It is hard to overestimate the influence of Calvin on culture, religion, politics and economics. When I recently watched a documentary of the coronation of Queen Elisabeth II in 1953, I was struck by the fact that she took an oath on being the defender of "the Protestant Reformed faith," if I am not mistaken. Without Luther and Calvin that oath would not be understandable.

Before we heap too much praise on Calvin, let us remember that he was about eight when Luther published his 95 theses, the core of which was "salvation by grace alone" (sola gratia) through faith alone (sola fide).

In a way, Calvin had a privileged youth. His father was the legal secretary of the bishop of Noyon; his mother seems to have had upper-class connection, though she died early. However, when Calvin was studying in Paris and Orleans, he received introduction into noble circles. While there, he must have met Renee of France, the orphaned sister of King Francois I of France. Renee was a year younger than Calvin and became a lifelong friend. She was Reformed, received Protestants at her court, (among others, Calvin, after his escape from Paris) and protected Huguenots after the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day.

The archives of Calvin College reportedly contain a copy of a letter from Calvin to Farel in which he complained about Renee's forced participation in the Roman mass. "How easily the highborn lapse from the faith!" wrote Calvin. Renee had four children, and her husband, the duke, was strongly Roman Catholic. She was under suspicion by the Inquisition, which convicted "heretics" and had them burned at the stake by secular authorities.

Influenced by Stoicism

To return to Calvin: when he stayed in Paris and Orleans, academic centres at that time, he came in contact with Augustinian monks, an encounter which resulted in his conversion. Today we would call Calvin a genius: he was fluent in several languages and had written a treatise on Seneca, a Roman Philosopher, who had been the tutor of young Nero. Seneca was a Stoic. Stoicism includes the idea that you have to submit to fate without hesitation. Hence, when Nero suspected Seneca of unfaithfulness and ordered him to commit suicide, he did so. I tell this because there seems to be a connection with Calvin's later Christian Motto: "I offer my heart to you, Lord, promptly and sincerely."

John Calvin's father originally designated his son to become a cleric, but he changed his mind after some disagreement with the bishop. He then directed John to study law. Calvin characteristically followed his father's advice. He apparently studied law with great success, for he seems to have been the scriptwriter of the rectorial oration delivered by Nicolas Cop at the University of Paris. Since the Inquisition suspected heretical tendencies in this speech, Calvin as well as Cop were advised to flee. At that time Calvin was probably in Ferrara.

Idelette followed, faithfully nursing and supporting him. They had three children, who all died in early infancy.

A dark page

Calvin received a lot of comments (both pro and con) on his work, including his writings. One of his fiercest opponents was Michael Servet (Servetus), a medical doctor from Spain, a genius in his own right. He enriched western medicine with his theory of the pulmonary exchange in the lung of carbon dioxide and oxygen But Servet was a doctrinal Sabellian who contradicted, even mocked, the doctrine of the Trinity (just like proponents of Judaism and Islam do).

A lively even nasty correspondence between him and Calvin developed. A Genevan merchant got hold of this correspondence and placed it in the hands of the Inquisition. If Servet had not escaped from Treves, where he practiced medicine, he would have been burned at the stake there. He showed up in Strassbourg and Geneva, however, and was evicted. But when he came to Geneva a second time, he was arrested, tried and sentenced as a heretic. He was subsequently burnt at the stake by the civil authority – an inexcusable, incomprehensible action carried out by Protestants – albeit Calvin had preferred a more "humane" form of capital punishment. (Was that, too, a form of Stoic, merciless mentality?) By the way, both Calvin and Servet, along with their writings, were burned in effigy near Paris at the behest of the Inquisition.

In contrast to all the caricatures that have been painted of Calvin, he was a very humble person. He died at the age of 55. Nobody knows where he was buried. He did not want veneration nor liked the concept of "Calvinism." He allowed Église Reformée as the name for a church whose Presbyterian order he had designed. He listened to and waited for God's Word, lecturing daily on Scripture for the public as well as his students.

The heart of his theology is the Sovereignty of God: "Soli Deo gloria." Calvin teaches me not to manipulate God, but to accept the Word of the cross. Calvinism, if anything, means: true respect for God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, who is who he is.

Jan Peereboom
Jordan Station, Ontario

What do you think?

This month we ask our readers to consider the following question for their input: "How sensitive are we or is your church or workplace to those with disabilities?"

Please send your response to Bert Witvoet via bert.witvoet@sympatico.ca

The Muslim presence in Rotterdam

Harry Antonides leads one to believe that Rotterdam is now part of the Islamic world (Sept. 14) issue. That is a misperception.

He writes that some neigborhoods of Rotterdam now look as if they have been lifted from the Middle East. This is not surprising in a city in which more than 40 percent of the population is an immigrant or a child of an immigrant. Some neigbourhoods in Vancouver look as if they were lifted from China. That's what mass immigration does.

However, this doesn't tell us how numerous Muslims in Rotterdam are. It is estimated that between 10 and 15 percent of Rotterdam's 600,000 people are Muslims. If there is one mosque for every 1000 Muslims, then there should be 90 mosques in Rotterdam. I doubt there are that many because mosque attendance is declining in The Netherlands according to a Dutch statistical office. The fact that churches are being closed does not attest to the strength of Islam but to the weakness of Christianity in The Netherlands today.

Pim Fortuyn was murdered by Volkert van der Graaf, a leftist, environmentalist and animal rightist, certainly not a Muslim fundamentalist. He killed Fortuyn because he judged Fortuyn's polarizing ways to be a threat to Dutch society. Fortuyn's murder can't be blamed on Islam.

True, Aboutaleb, the new mayor of Rotterdam is the son of an imam and a practicing Muslim. However, that fact by itself is not a disqualification. His appointment was entirely correct, and nobody has ever been able to associate Aboutaleb with Islamic radicalism. If Muslims are to see themselves as an integral part of Dutch society, some of them have to be able to reach the top and hold high office.

Rotterdam, of course, also has a city council. Of the 45 councillors, 14 are members of "Leefbaar Rotterdam," the party created by Pim Fortuyn and hostile to Islam. I counted 10 councillors with non-European names, which is not that many in a city in which more that 40 percent are non-natives and their children, more than 50 percent of them non-European. There are Muslims in the city council of Rotterdam, but no Islamic party is represented in it. It doesn't quite look to me that Muslims have a strong political grip on Rotterdam.

No theater in Rotterdam has its seats segregated by gender on a permanent basis. What happened is that one theater, for one night and at the request of a Moroccan standup comedian, reserved five rows of seats for women only. The remaining rows were not segregated.

As to Bouchra Ismaili, she is not a city councillor but a neighborhood councillor. She didn't write a letter to the editor but an email to the website "Het Vrije Volk," a forum for rabid Islamophobia. After the email became public knowledge, she said that she wrote it in a fit of anger. In any case, she is not necessarily representative of all Muslims, any more than Dutchmen who advocate the deportation of all Muslims from The Netherlands are representative of non-Islamic Dutch public opinion.

I think that you made some good points. Too many concessions are made sometimes to Muslims, but many of such concessions are more the product of political correctness than of the power of the Muslim minority. Concern about the growing presence of Islam in Western countries is rational and legitimate, but exaggerations are never helpful.

To me, the advent of Eurabia in the foreseeable future seems fanciful. Let's do a little calculation. There are 16 million people in The Netherlands, of whom one million is Islamic. Let's assume that in 2050 the non-Muslim population will have declined to 14 million. If the Muslims are to become a majority by then, they'll have to grow to 15 million, a 15-fold increase. That is highly unlikely because according to the CBS the fertility of Muslim women in The Netherlands is falling rapidly and the inflow of Muslim immigrations is not that high.

In conclusion, it is not warranted to regard Rotterdam as a Eurabian city today or to fear that The Netherlands will be part of Eurabia in the near future. As to the distant future, I don't have a crystal ball and will not venture any predictions.

James Schipper
London, Ontario

Christian Courier

Member of Canadian Church Press and Evangelical Press Association

Canada Mail:
PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40009999
REGISTRATION NO. 9375
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN ADDRESSES TO
CHRISTIAN COURIER
5 JOANNA DR
ST. CATHARINES ON L2N 1V1
email: **subscriptions@christiancourier.ca**

U.S. Mail:
Christian Courier
(USPS 518-090)
Second-class postage paid at Lewiston NY
Postmaster: send address changes to: Christian Courier, Box 110 Lewiston NY 14092

Subscriptions:	Canada (G.S.T. incl.)	USA	Overseas
one yr. (24 issues)	$44.00	$44.00 US	$85.00
two yrs. (48 issues)	$85.00	$85.00 US	

Advertising deadlines: display and classified advertising: Wednesday, 9 a.m. (12 days before publication date) See classified pages or web site **www.christiancourier** for more details. (ISSN 1192-3415) Published second and fourth Mondays of the month.

Address all correspondence to: 5 Joanna Dr, St. Catharines ON L2N 1V1
Tel: 905-682-8311 or 1-800-969-4838
e-mail: Advertising: ads@christiancourier.ca
Subscriptions: subscriptions@christiancourier.ca

PRINTED IN CANADA

The lost art of citizenship

Kathy Vandergrift

Most Canadians are relieved that election fever has cooled, likely until spring.The debate about this in the last month, however, raises major concerns about the health of Canada's democracy. Canadians, according to the polls, do not want to be bothered to be citizens, or they do not think the outcome is worth their time. Even more disturbing is the view that economic recovery trumps exercise of citizenship.

Deeper than the question of an election or not is the need to renew a sense of citizenship in Canada. What are we really saying to ourselves? Are we not able to be producers, consumers, and citizens at the same time? Isn't the direction of our economy part of the public discussion we should have as citizens? Have we lost so much confidence in our political system that we no longer care how we are governed?

Why it's hard to care

There are several layers to the challenge of citizenship in Canada. First is a general lack of basic knowledge about how our government works. Another is the erosion of our political language and discourse to the lowest forms of propaganda and demagoguery. A pet peeve of mine is the disgusting propaganda that comes from my MP into my home every week – at my expense as a taxpayer – and pretending to be public information. There's a program to cut! Originally, the program to allow MPs to send free information to households was a good idea. It was supposed to keep us informed about national issues. It is now so misused, however, that it is worse than useless.

Other alarm bells went off when a long-time senior advisor to our current government wrote in the Globe and Mail that the Prime Minister did not need to tell the truth; he just had to have a "plausible answer that voters would buy." Honesty is key to confidence in government; we need to demand it as citizens.

Right now our media is part of the problem. Most cover politics like sports; they focus on the game – who wins or loses. The spin from each party is as deep as they dig to bring us what they call insight. The real issues facing Canada are seldom investigated. Rarely do they provide enough analysis to understand the policy choices that are being made behind closed doors. If we knew, we might not be so apathetic.

Why we need to care

There are important issues and choices that should have more genuine public debate.

The role Canada plays in the world is changing, and we are not part of the discussion. Do we care about giving all children a fair chance in Canada? Then we need to understand and push for reform of family policy in Canada. Do we want a prison system like the US – without public debate? Do we care that Canada recruits the most educated people from poor countries, while reducing acceptance of refugees, and shifting aid dollars to match our trade agenda? Then we need public debate about immigration and development policy. Do we reject the important issues in the green shift debate just because they were not sold to us with charisma? Many areas of Canadian policy beg for thoughtful public discussion, but will get almost no attention unless citizens demand it.

At a deeper level, there are structural flaws in our political system. Good ideas for reform die again and again because they are not in the interests of the government in power and citizens seemingly do not care enough to push them through.

At the bottom of all these layers is the need for citizens in Canada to take back our democracy. That will take more than voting. It will take regular, active engagement in public affairs and persistence, starting with some righteous anger about the current state of politics in Canada. It is said that we get the quality of government we deserve. We deserve better, so what are we going to do about it?

Kathy Vandergrift, a policy analyst, chairs the board of Citizens for Public Justice, and teaches a course in Public Ethics for Trinity Western's Laurentian Leadership Centre. She lives in Ottawa.

The lure of the wilderness and technology

Technically Speaking
Derek Schuurman

This past summer, my wife and I along with our four children traveled "out west" in our ten-year-old minivan while pulling a small tent-trailer. Our trip took us from our home in Ontario through Michigan and Iowa, to Mount Rushmore, into Yellowstone park, through Montana, and up into the Alberta Rockies. Along the way, we stayed at various campsites using the tent trailer and a tent we had taken with us.

I observed that despite the attraction of the pristine wilderness, people are drawn to take all manner of technology with them when they camp. At one extreme are the palatial recreational vehicles (RVs) equipped with all the amenities of home, including satellite dishes, large screen televisions, climate-controlled interiors, and full-service hook-ups. One campsite I saw this summer even had a plastic water fountain which was plugged in to gurgle just outside an RV. To one extent or another, there seems to be a tension between the garden and the wilderness. We seem to yearn for the great outdoors, but we are reluctant to leave our technology and creature comforts behind.

My own dependence

My initial reaction to these monstrous RVs was to shake my head as they rumbled past our campsite. But upon further reflection, I realized my own dependence on technology during my holidays. Despite the need to "get away," I took along my nifty "netbook" computer to check my e-mail, using wireless access points along our way. It enabled me to stay in touch, but it also prevented me from really being "away" from the office. I still received all manner of e-mails which made for tiny little "interrupts" to my holidays. The benefits of keeping in touch with family and being reachable for urgent matters may have been outweighed by the daily onslaught of other e-mails. Like a virtual electronic leash, the netbook constantly tugged me back to my work wherever I was situated.

Another incident underscored my own dependence on technology during our holidays. Just outside Rosebud Alberta, we discovered that our GPS navigation unit was no longer functioning. In a moment of panic, I wondered how we would find our way home without a GPS. The entire trip we were blindly heeding the various verbal directions emanating from this pocket-sized box: "Turn left in 100 meters," "take ramp right," and, on occasion, we heard it patiently say "re-calculating" after a wrong turn. Fortunately, we had a few "old fashioned" maps as backup and we were geographically literate enough to read them. I felt relief when I later managed to repair our electronic "navigator" upon which we had become so dependent.

An incident that illustrated my dependence on creature comforts occurred when our air conditioning broke down near "Dog River," Saskatchewan (actually called Roleau, Saskatchewan – it's the location on which the TV show "Corner Gas" was based). Vainly we toggled the air conditioning switch on and off only to be greeted by warm air from our vents. The discomfort arising from the soaring prairie temperatures was exacerbated by a driver's side electric window which would periodically seize, preventing me from opening the window. At the time, air conditioning seemed like a necessary technology.

A time for less

I can't imagine a technology-free vacation. Tents, sleeping bags, propane stoves, LED flashlights and clean flush toilets are all technologies that make camping a more enjoyable experience for me. The idea of sleeping in the open, building a shelter from twigs and branches, starting a fire by rubbing two sticks together, and using leaves for toilet paper is not appealing. Despite all my years of university education, I would likely not survive without technology in the wilderness. I could not live on roots and berries (plant identification was not part of my engineering education). Unlike the professor on "Gilligan's Island," this professor cannot easily make useful things out of bamboo and coconuts.

Here is a tip for those who desire to minimize computer technology interruptions on their holidays. First, avoid checking your regular e-mail; setup a temporary e-mail address that you will check while away on holidays and give it only to a few trusted people. This will ensure that you are reachable, but will spare you from wading through your normal mountain of e-mail, most of which you will find too hard to resist reading. And where possible, try to spend some time in "technology free" zones on your holidays. I have become convinced that we also need rest from the continual bombardment of media, news, and electronic distractions in our lives. The preacher in Ecclesiastes reminds us that there is a time under heaven for everything; perhaps there is also a time to enjoy the great outdoors and a time to refrain from using computers (maybe with the exception of a GPS to get you there).

Dr. Derek Schuurman and his wife Carina have 4 children. The whole family has spent long hours sitting in their minivan traveling last summer out east, and this past summer, out west. He can be reached at dschuurman@cs.redeemer.ca, but he may not reply right away if he is on holidays.

News

In India, student hazing grows violent

Efforts to end increasingly violent 'ragging' at universities are spurred by an accidental death

Mian Ridge **(CSM)**

NEW DELHI – Aman Kachroo was a handsome, easygoing 19-year-old in the first year of medical school in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. On March 6, at 2 a.m., he was awakened by a group of drunken senior students and dragged out of his bed for a "ragging," the bullying systematically meted out to first-year undergraduates in Indian universities. He and half a dozen other freshmen were slapped, punched, and had their heads beaten against a wall for two hours. The following day, Aman died of brain injuries.

Initiation rites for new students occur throughout the world. But India's version has grown alarmingly violent. Aman's death was the 12th caused by ragging – a tally that includes suicides – in the past year alone, according to the Coalition to Uproot Ragging in Schools (CURE), a nongovernmental organization.

"When I was at university, ragging was a bit of fun," says Aman's father, Raj Kachroo. "So when Aman told me about the ragging a few days before he died, I did not take him seriously.… I now realize it has become something entirely different."

Within days of his son's death, Mr. Kachroo, a former professor of engineering, began a nationwide campaign against the practice. With a team of lawyers, the organization he established, the Aman Movement (www.amanmovement.org), petitioned the Supreme Court to make ragging illegal. In May, the court declared it a "human rights abuse in essence.' Now Kachroo, an engineering consultant, has taken a year off to speak in schools and colleges around India to help make that judgment a reality.

With its judgment, the Supreme Court ordered a slew of antiragging measures in every higher educational institution, including stopping funding to universities with especially poor ragging records. The court said universities should have mobile antiragging squads and impose harsh penalties for students who participate in ragging. A national, toll-free help line has also been set up on the court's instruction.

Universities are taking the ruling seriously. At Delhi University, during the month of August, khaki-clad police stood guard at every campus gate. Alongside fliers inviting new students to join extracurricular societies, posters warned that "An Act of Ragging May Land You in Jail."

"I wasn't expecting this," says Arshee Khosla, an economics undergraduate, as she approached police standing outside her campus gate on the first day of the term. She did not find their presence particularly reassuring: "I guess these things happen behind closed doors."

Indeed Kachroo says that while the Supreme Court ruling is a great step forward, it is not, in itself, enough. Without changing peoples' perceptions of ragging and its effects, the law will achieve nothing, he says.

Western influence?

Experts cite several reasons why ragging has become so dangerous.

Harsh Agarwal of CURE believes that Indian undergraduates mimic the kind of hazing rituals they see in Hollywood movies, "but they don't really understand and get it wrong."

Many education experts say that as more low-caste, low-income Indians attend university, ragging is used to subjugate them, although, "just as often it is lower castes trying to hurt upper castes," says Mr. Agarwal. Certainly, Aman came from a successful middle-class family.

Jasmeen Patheja, the founder of Blank Noise, a group that encourages women to actively protest sexual harassment,

says that ragging often manifests itself as sexual abuse.

Public displays of sexual harassment, known as "Eve teasing," seem to be on the rise as this deeply conservative society is exposed to the media of more permissive cultures, from explicit films to sexually charged ads.

Last month, in a bid to tackle this growing problem, a college in Uttar Pradesh banned its female students from wearing "vulgar Western" clothing, a category in which it included denim jeans.

For Kachroo, all these changes come down to one thing: "a loss of values. India is becoming materialistic so fast," he says. "Society is becoming selfish and obsessed by power. Ragging is about power." If he doesn't reach enough colleges this year, Kachroo adds, he will take another year off work, funds allowing, to continue his campaign. "If I don't do it, no one else is going to," he says.

Carleton U. team suspended after rookie hazing

Harold Alkema

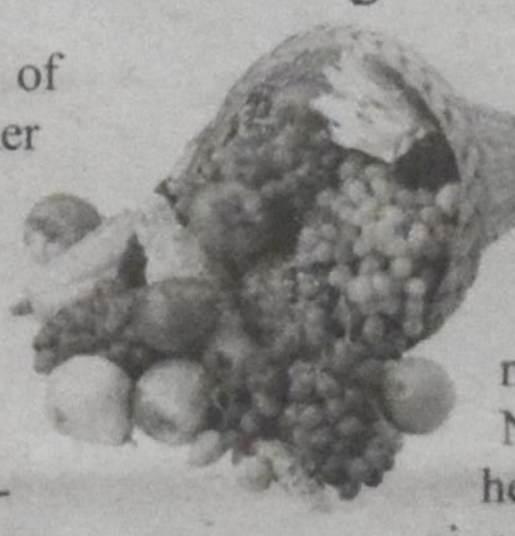
OTTAWA, Ont – On September 18, the Carleton Women's soccer team was suspended after a hazing ritual carried out against rookie members at a party. Officials were cautious about giving exact details, but Jennifer Brenning, the university athletics director, noted that her department's codes of conduct forbid alcohol abuse and hazing. She added that those rules were violated at the event in question.

The team, which had a record of two wins, two losses and a tie going into the suspension, was made to engage in charity work, including a local soup kitchen. Two scheduled road games against the University of Toronto and Ryerson University were cancelled. Ultimately, the university decided that a two-game suspension was sufficient and will allow the team to play the remainder of its games. This led some students and members of the public to conclude that the women received only "a slap on the wrist." Others argued the decision was sexist, claiming that a men's team would have received a much harsher penalty for the same infraction.

Country living

Maynard van der Galien

Enjoy the Thanksgiving turkey but don't think of Pilgrims



It's a known fact that people think of the Pilgrims of Plymouth on Thanksgiving when the family gets together for the big turkey dinner. It is as unthinkable to celebrate Thanksgiving Day without thoughts of old Pilgrims, as it is to have Thanksgiving dinner without turkey!

One of the greatest myths of Thanksgiving concerns the role of the Pilgrims. They most likely did not eat turkey. The colonists who established the Plymouth Colony did not refer to themselves as Pilgrims. Their self-descriptive title was "Separatists" denoting their theological break with the Church of England.

I'm going to call them colonists – a break from tradition. No need to romanticize the event. The colonists, who supposedly celebrated the first thanksgiving in America, were fleeing religious persecution in their native England.

Dutch connection

In 1609 a large group of these people left England for the religious freedom in Holland where they lived and prospered.

After a few years, their children were speaking Dutch and had become attached to the Dutch way of life. This worried the new immigrants. So they decided to leave Holland and travel to the New World.

The group, numbering 101 men, women and children, left Plymouth, England, on Sept. 6, 1620, in the Mayflower. The trip was cold and damp. Since there was danger of fire on the wooden ship, the food had to be eaten cold. Many were sick.

On Nov. 21 the Mayflower dropped anchor in the sheltered harbour off the present-day Provincetown, Mass. The colonists landed on the site of Plymouth the following December 21.

The first winter was devastating for the new settlers. The cold, snow and sleet was exceptionally heavy, interfering with the workers as they tried to construct their settlement. March brought warmer weather and the health of the colonists improved, but many had died during the long winter.

The natives taught them to grow corn and how to store food away for the winter. The harvest in October was very successful.

The following year their harvest was not as bountiful and they ran short of food. The third year brought a spring and summer that was hot and dry and crops were dying in the fields. The colonist Governor William Bradford ordered a day of fasting and prayer, and it was soon thereafter that rain came. To celebrate, November 29 of that year was proclaimed a day of thanksgiving.

Canadian Thanksgiving

But long ago, before the colonists and the first Europeans arrived in North America, the farmers in Europe held celebrations at harvest time. To give thanks for their good fortune and the abundance of food, the farm workers filled a curved goat's horn with fruit and grain. This symbol was called a cornucopia or horn of plenty. When they came to Canada they brought this tradition with them.

Some people credit the English navigator Martin Frobisher for the Canadian Thanksgiving Day. In the year 1578, Frobisher held a formal ceremony, in what is now called Newfoundland, to give thanks for surviving the long journey.

Around the same time as the colonists, French settlers, who had crossed the ocean and arrived in Canada with explorer Samuel de Champlain, also held huge feasts of thanks.

The U.S. and Canada had a difficult time deciding when a day of Thanksgiving should occur. Since 1931, the Canadian Thanksgiving has been celebrated on the second Monday of October, except in 1935 when it was moved to October 24.

In 1957 Parliament issued a proclamation to fix permanently the second Monday in October as "a day of general Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the bountiful harvest with which Canada has been blessed."

If those American colonists didn't eat turkey, what did they eat on that special day? My guess is they ate a cornbread meal, wild meat – rabbit, grouse or venison – and maybe *stamp-pot*. *Stamppot* is a popular Dutch food eaten during the fall months. Maybe they ate *boerenkool*. Remember these folks had become attached to the Dutch way of life.

That's it, *stamppot* and *boerenkool*! Why not romanticize a little?

Whatever you imagine, don't think of pilgrims when eating the traditional holiday turkey.

Have a Blessed Thanksgiving! Thank God for all our many blessings.

Maynard and Mae van der Galien of Renfrew, Ont. spent an enjoyable three days in northern Ontario – two days at the 2009 Temiskaming International Plowing Match and Rural Expo held at Earlton from September 22-26.

Church

German Protestant leader encourages N. Korean Christians

BONN, Germany (ENI) – Germany's senior Protestant bishop has urged Christians in officially atheist North Korea to obey God first and foremost (and not their government leaders). Issues of nuclear weapons and the division of Korea into north and south face the isolated nation.

Bishop Wolfgang Huber, council chairperson of Germany's Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD), spoke recently during a service in the Bongsun Church in Pyongyang, North Korea's capital. Without alluding to Kim Jong-il, who in 1997 succeeded his father as leader of North Korea, Huber quoted from Acts 5:29 when he said, "We ought to obey God rather than human beings."

Huber told those assembled his delegation's visit to North and South Korea should be seen as an attempt "to better understand how we, as Christians can contribute so that here in Korea, all people in the North and in the South can live in peace without borders separating them."

A delegation from Germany's Protestant Church, led by Huber, spent four days in North Korea last month as guests of the country's state-sanctioned Korean Christian Federation before they travelled to South Korea. Christians from both Koreas have been meeting at church conferences on German soil over the last two decades. Huber said the visit was taking place during a time of commemorations celebrating the 20th anniversary of the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall that divided Germany into East and West in the manner that Korea is divided into North and South.

Special understanding

The German people have a special interest and understanding of the fate of the Korean people due to Germany's division for so long after the end of the Second World War, said Huber. That's why Germans could not remain cold to the fate of millions of Korean families

"We ought to obey God rather than human beings."

forcibly separated already for more than 50 years, he said. Twenty years ago "we Germans were thankful for the solidarity and support of our neighbouring countries and that of the whole European continent, to overcome the tragedy of our divided country. As Christians we therefore call on all governments and politicians all over the world to seriously prepare the way so that peace, unity, prosperity and liberty can also be achieved on the Korean peninsula."

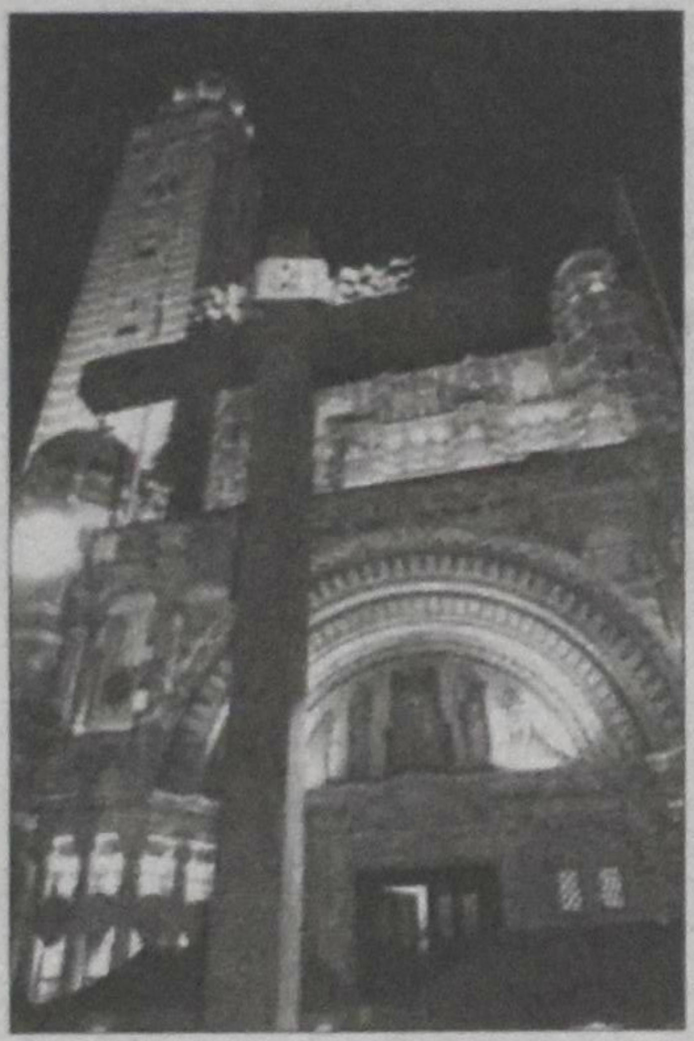
That peninsula has been divided since 1950, when South Korea and a US-led United Nations force fought against North Koreans backed by Chinese ground troops and aided by the Soviet Union. Hostilities came to a halt in an armistice signed at Panmunjom on July 27, 1953, but a formal cease-fire has yet to be realized.

EFC highlights Network of Ministry to Muslims

Marian Van Til, *with files from EFC*

TORONTO – Last month the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) website called attention to "Loving Muslims Together," the work of the Canadian Network of Ministry to Muslims.

The national network is made up of "local networks" whose mandate is to minister to Muslims by helping local Christian churches across Canada do the following: "mobilize workers and congregations to begin new ministries; network and partner together to accelerate the task; strategize to effectively reach the Muslims in our neighbourhoods; promote prayer for specific people and ministry needs."



Unlike the current view in many mainline Protestant churches, the network does not see presenting the Gospel to Muslims as incompatible with "embracing cultural diversity," since the way to truly love one's neighbor is to introduce him or her to the Savior of the world. The network is "committed to disciple making," which can occur by "initiating positive relationships with Muslims."

This past spring the EFC released the results of a discussion between EFC staff members and the Ministry to Muslims network. (The release was timed to coincide with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on March 21.) A Muslim-background Christian believer, "Pastor Faheem," pointed out that "spiritually mature Christians need to be flexible when learning to understand Muslim culture." He explained, "This requires recognizing the difference between a Canadian Christian cultural worldview of guilt and innocence (right and wrong) and the Muslim cultural worldview of honour and shame. To reach out effectively the Canadian church has to step out from its worldview and value the significance of the Muslim worldview."

Pastor Faheem continued, "People can feel real love from your heart. This is not a type of ministry you simply

..."spiritually mature Christians need to be flexible when learning to understand Muslim culture."

study from a book and then apply as a project. Sincerity cannot be taught; you must be genuine. Faheem noted the importance of recognizing that we all need a healing process. Ask that God will heal you from your own wounds before beginning this kind of ministry, he said. Healing equals a sweet spirit. Confess and bring your weakness to the glory of God."

Pastor Faheem concluded that person-to-person outreach "is preferable to church-to-mosque outreach." But if a church-to-mosque outreach is decided on, "it is recommended that a Muslim-background believer be involved with the relationship building process. Such Christians represent an organic understanding and act as an immediate bridge builder."

Pastor Faheem also offered these suggestions for approaching and witnessing to Muslims:

- *Pray for them and ask God what he wants you to do.*
- *Build bridges in friendship.*
- *Show love.*
- *Do not point out their weaknesses but be encouraging.*
- *Do not try to convert Muslims to Christianity; it must be remembered that it is God's job to convert.*
- *Do not be competitive or argue about faiths.*
- *Allow Muslims to ask you questions and then share God's love.*

"The Purple Mountain Majesties" by Basilio D. of Pennsylvania

Prison ministry opens art gallery

Marian Van Til, *with files from CBI*

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – The Crossroad Bible Institute has opened an art gallery that features works created by prison inmates with whom the institute has worked. Art works displayed will rotate in order to feature the work of the largest possible number of CBI's 40,000 students who submitted works for the gallery. The art reflects the inmates' developing faith and renewed hope.

Crossroad Bible Institute, founded in 1984, describes its work as providing prisoners across North America with "faith-based re-entry education, to equip the church to make disciples, to guide our students into reentry agencies upon their release and to educate the church on criminal and restorative justice issues."

In 1999, CBI began inviting its students to submit art for possible publication in *Crossroad Journal of the Arts*, a quarterly publication mailed to CBI's students. The competition that resulted led to an increase in the volume and quality of art submitted. That, in turn, inspired the formation of the gallery.

"CBI sees the art of these students as a healthy outlet and a demonstration of how art can function as a component of treatment, education and development. The creation of the art and recognition of the artists has proven to be both healing and life enhancing for our students," says CBI president David Schuringa.

The gallery features art in a variety of media – graphic art, pen and ink, colored pencil, paintings and occasional ceramic pieces – including the written arts: poems, short stories, essays. With few resources to create the art, the students sometimes use the back of an envelope as a canvas.

The Grand Opening of the Crossroad Inmate Art Gallery was held last month at CBI's headquarters in Grandville, Michigan. The gallery is now open daily from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. with free admission. Kim Vander Lende is the gallery's curator.

Canadian universities see rise in Iranian applicants

Marian Van Til

TORONTO – The largest number of foreign students in Canada normally comes from China, followed by the United States and France. But this year, Iran was at the head of the class with 618 masters and PhD applicants, reports the Canadian Press news service.

The number of graduate students from Iran tripled between 2002 and 2006, according to the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. Iran ranked sixth among countries sending graduate students to Canada in 2006, the association said.

The spike in Iranian applicants at the University of Alberta was a 60-per-cent jump from 2008, said Britta Baron, provost and vice-president international at the university. "This year there is a very dramatic increase, and in all likelihood the political reason may play a role," said Baron, referring to the turmoil that erupted in the wake of the Iranian election this past summer. Baron noted that Iranian students "are well-trained by Iranian universities, the language barrier is not very serious and they seem to integrate very well."

At McGill University in Montreal, Iran ranked 14th in 2003. It is now eighth; 149 post-graduate students were accepted in 2008. Partly, the jump is a result of "a targeted marketing campaign," says Lissa Matyas, McGill's recruitment director. McGill advertises fellowship opportunities to students in specific faculties at prestigious Iranian schools. "The admission in engineering has skyrocketed due to this proactive approach," says Matyas. She added that some Iranians applying for visas to study in the United States were having difficulties, which she admits has been a boon for Canadian universities.

Students in Iran have to pass a national exam to get into university and, similar to undergraduates in Canada and the U.S., have to spend four years studying before applying to a graduate program. They come to Canada from top-notch schools such as Sharif University of Science and Technology or the University of Tehran.

Christians singled out in school ban on Christmas music

PHILADELPHIA, Penn. (CNA) – In the ongoing battle over the secularization and marginalization of Christmas, legal arguments have begun in a U.S. federal appeal that seeks to reverse a New Jersey school district's policy regarding "Christmas" music. The school district banned the performance of religious music in the district's public schools. Opponents of the ban claim it singles out Christian traditions for disapproval and hostility.

Robert Muise, an attorney with the Thomas More Law Center, argued before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in Philadelphia beginning on September 14, the Law Center reported. Muise noted that Christmas is a national (and international) holiday. He described "religious music" in the public schools as "one of the rich traditions of this season."

The lawsuit was filed for Michael Stratechuk, who sued on his own and on behalf of his two children, who are students in the South Orange-Maplewood School District in New Jersey. The suit alleges that the ban is an impermissible government-sponsored message of disapproval of and hostility towards religion, violating the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

The suit claims that the ban deprives Karl and Kurt Stratechuk of the right to receive information and ideas. The Law Center describes this right as an "inherent corollary" of their First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and academic freedom.

The Thomas More Law Center charges that the school district's 2004 ban was specifically aimed at preventing Christmas music, including simple instrumentals, during the traditional year-end holiday concerts. Traditional Christmas music had previously been performed at these concerts for over 60 years.

"Those that are hostile to these traditions hide behind the mantle of 'tolerance,' only to promote intolerance," Muise said. "We learn to understand and respect traditions, customs, and beliefs not by being offended or threatened by the traditions of others, but by understanding the meaning of such traditions and why they have the capacity to inspire."

According to the Law Center, the disputed school district policy was called to attention in the book *The War on Christmas* by Fox News anchor John Gibson.

Britain: Boy starts new school as a girl

LONDON (TCI) – A twelve-year-old boy has started at his new secondary school dressed as a girl and says he wants a sex change operation when he is old enough.

Other pupils at the school were left confused and upset after the boy's decision was announced in a school assembly, according to newspaper reports. Pupils were warned that if they refused to refer to the boy as a girl and use the new name he has adopted they would face punishment.

The mother of one of the boy's classmates said, "What has really upset the parents is that the school didn't see fit to send us a letter first so we could explain it to our children in our own way. Parents surely have a right to know when their children are being confronted with such sensitive issues as gender realignment at such a young age."

The school, in the south of England, has provided the pupil with a separate toilet and changing room in the sports hall. The name of the school has not been disclosed.

The boy's mother said: "We are committed to ensuring the very best for our child. We are working with other agencies to ensure our child's welfare is protected."

It is understood that at the boy's primary school, his head teacher insisted that the children treat him as a boy. The pupil reportedly wore a bikini in swimming lessons and his hair in pigtails.

Reports say the boy is hoping to have sex-change surgery and hormone treatment, but this is rarely permitted in the UK before the age of 16. Earlier this year a 16-year-old German boy became the youngest transsexual in the world.

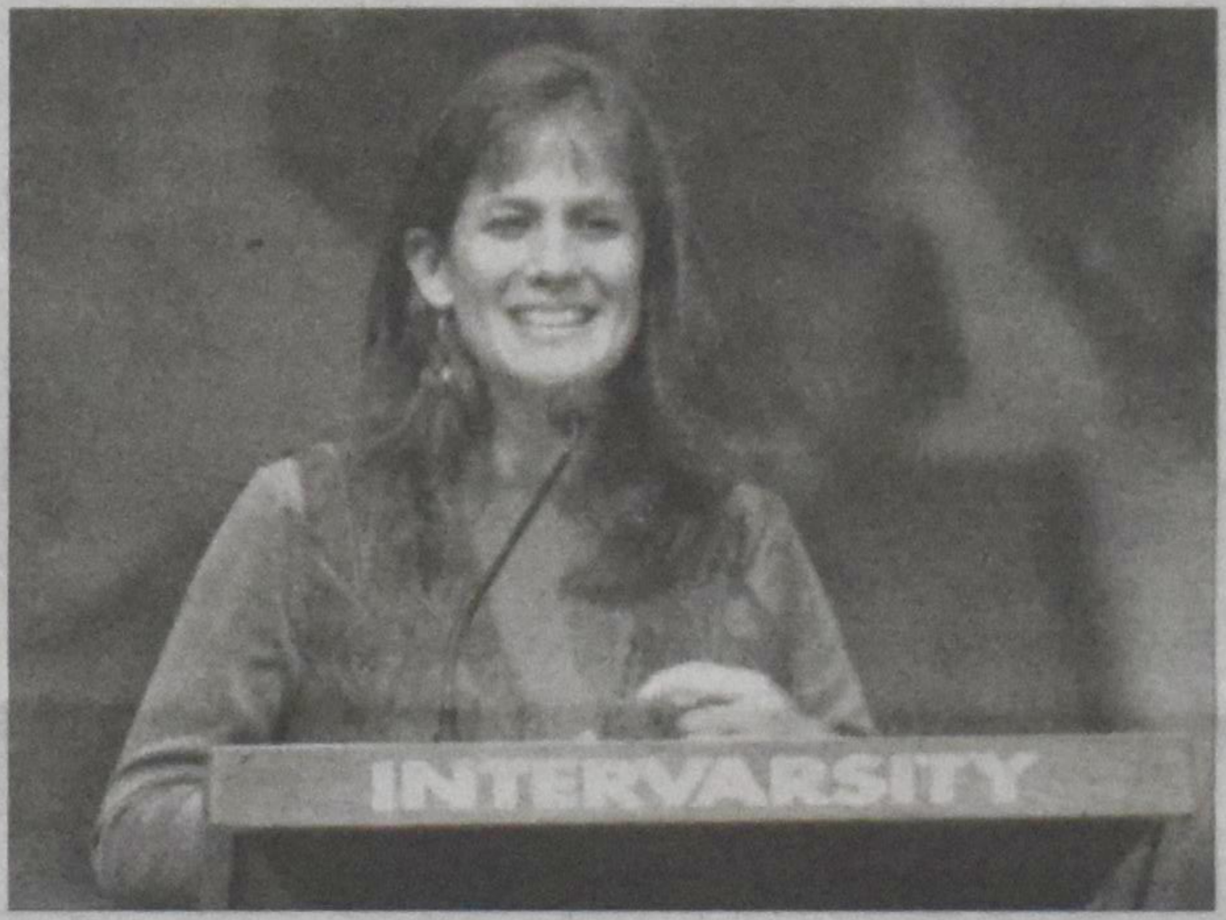
Critics of sex change operations say that transsexualism involves a psychological problem, not a physical one, and so radical physical surgery is inappropriate. Many transsexuals regret their decision to live in the opposite sex. A British Home Office report on transsexualism says, "Many people revert to their biological sex after living for some time in the opposite sex." Doctors from the NHS Portman Clinic – an internationally acclaimed centre – have stated, "what many patients find is that they are left with a mutilated body, but the internal conflicts remain."

CRC missionary to speak at biggest student mission conference

URBANA, Ill. (CRCNW) – Ruth Padilla DeBorst, a Christian Reformed World Missions missionary in Latin America, will be one of the keynote speakers at Urbana 09, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship's biennial student mission conference, the largest such gathering in the world. Padilla DeBorst, is also general secretary of the Latin American Theological Fellowship.

Set for December 27-31 in St. Louis, Missouri, the conference will likely draw – as it has in the past – at least 20,000 students from around the globe. Padilla DeBorst will be one of seven main speakers.

"We're really excited about this and hope to have some great ways to connect all of the CRC Urbana attendees this year," perhaps by holding a special CRC event at which Padilla DeBorst will speak, says Kathryn Shane, placement coordinator for CRWM.



DeBorst at 2000 Urbana Conference.

Retired missionary Gordon Buys says that when he worked as a mission recruiter and attended "Urbana," as the conference is simply referred to, "I always felt inspired and renewed by the plenary sessions ... and a venue filled with nearly 20,000 persons, mostly college-age students, who were honestly wrestling with God's call on their lives, expressing themselves in heart-warming praise and worship."

A little bit like heaven

Buys continued, "For me, each time I went was a little bit like what I expect heaven to be. For students it was a bit like drinking from a fire hydrant with a straw, trying desperately to take in the seminars, workshops and plenaries, visiting the hundreds of mission displays offering opportunities from Capetown to Calgary, Beijing to Buenos Aires, and getting enough sleep to face the next day of similar activities." Buys says he has "encouraged my kids to go, and now my grandkids are at the stage and looking forward to participation as well."

Several Christian Reformed Church agencies are offering Christian Reformed young people grants to help pay traveling expenses to attend the Urbana conference. Applications will be accepted through the end of November.

"Urbana is the single biggest means by which many people solidify their commitment to missions. I went to Urbana many years ago and it certainly had a big impact on me and I ended up serving in missions," says Steve Van Zanen, CRWM's director for Missions Education and Engagement. "I did not feel called to be a missionary then, but I knew that I was called to dedicate my life to seeing the Lord Jesus worshipped around the world whether my contribution was praying, giving or going."

The theme this year is "The Word Made Flesh." More information is available at *www.urbana09.org*.

Family

Stones at a family reunion

Linda Siebenga

As family approached the driveway, two laminated life size figures could be seen standing against a field of blooming canola; blown up photographs of two brothers in their patched work clothes beside a sign that read "Welcome Siebenga Reunion."

The first stories of the weekend came from people seeing these figures in the distance, not realizing at first who was standing at the entrance of this long driveway, or why someone was standing there. Reactions varied from laughter to tears to see these brothers, Siebe and Harry as welcoming signposts.

Eighty years ago two Dutch immigrant brothers had arrived in Lacombe, Alberta with two suitcases and $40 between them. Five years later, they had bought the piece of land on which their cutout figures were now standing with their arms behind their backs. Between their coming and the purchase of land, the youngest brother, then 22 years old, had come close to being deported after losing both his arms under the wheels of a moving train.

For months we had been preparing posters, displaying memorabilia, planning food and events for the 60 people coming for the weekend. Now the last blade of grass was cut, coffee urns in place, electrical cords strung for campers, and milk from the neighbours was ready to run through the old cream separator.

Our own Ebenezer

The weekend sped by with lots of food and visiting, a wagon trip through tall grain fields, exercising our muscles on both ends of a cross cut saw, a power point of old black-and-white photos, two tours, bonfires at night and a spectacular display of lightening and thunder as well as a delightful show of fireworks.

But the highlight for me was the Sunday morning worship service under the trees in the back yard as each family or individual brought a rock to place on a pile like the Israelites did after crossing the Jordan River. The Joshua 4 passage answers the question, "What do these stones mean?" – a focusing point to remember the power and greatness of God. We didn't know how many people would participate – bring a rock and share a text or part of their faith journey or share how these two immigrant young men had passed on the faith.

We joked about this exercise as a way to get the rocks picked off the farm. We stated outright that we were not eager to mow around or have the grass or weeds grow up through a pile of rocks in our back yard. As each individual or family took turns stepping to the front of the group sitting in lawn chairs in the shade of trees, this growing pile of stones brought us together.

Healing stories

"I found this rock by the Blindman River where dad used to fish, " said a daughter now living in Bolivia, where her husband, a former greenhouse man, now shares his knowledge of growing things and where she brings her Reformed vision to a Spanish-speaking people. She shared Zechariah 13:9, "They will call on my name, and I will answer them; I will say they are my people, and they will say, 'The Lord is our God'."

The son who owns the farm brought the rock he had found while seeding a field several years ago. It was an Indian Hammerhead, and he explained how a trail had gone through this land before the white men came and that the people who had lived here then also sought to understand a higher being.

There were rocks with names written on them and stories of faith challenged by circumstances or the death of a child, stories of coming into the family and gradually feeling a sense of belonging, stories of being adopted into the family and feeling the providence of God through that. There were recurring texts, several references to Jeremiah 29:11 having been used as a wedding text, "I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Another favourite was the Micah 6:8 call to justice, also used for a wedding text.

The sentence that runs through my head when I am stressed, "The Lord is my light and my salvation", was a text chosen by more distant relatives. We were glad to hear their affirmation "that it is a gift to be emotional", for we were all feeling some emotions, sharing in this group what we didn't often say.

Someone recalled grandma as a standing stone, a woman who understood that God is our cornerstone. Someone celebrated loyalty and integrity between brothers. Someone was glad to be able to pass on to the next generation that God is our rock, a firm place to stand. Someone shared how she had been valued by her parents for who she was.

There was a rock from the corral and a rock from the cemetery, a rock with worries laid down and a small rock that came from Israel and looked like a white peppermint. I Corinthians 13 and Isaiah 40 were other shared family favourites. One of youngest generation led us in singing, "The Lord is good to me."

Through the stories of people's journeys we became more connected as the pile of rocks grew. Not a sacred pile, but a statement from each other affirming our humanness under the umbrella of God's love, that even though this pile of rocks disappears, even "though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet [God's] love for us will not be shaken" (Isaiah 54:10).

Linda Siebenga (www.inscribe.org/lindasiebenga) attends Woodynook CRC, Lacombe, Alberta. She is a member of Inscribe, Christian Writers' Fellowship.

OUR OLD HOMESTEAD

Soft sounds dance
around the empty old house,
peopling each corner.
And we hear again
the intense joy in the whispers
at the doors and windows,
or while sliding down the stair
with exited squeals that echoed
through the chimney as then
on early Christmas mornings.

We recall
the light of the tall white
candles
in the bay window reaching out
to our friends to share peace
and joy.

We see
now idle after decades
that old bronze bell still
reminding us always of work,
play, and of prayer.

We sigh
contented, when a sun ray plays
on our old house. it is like a smile
on a wrinkled face recalling her
very first kiss.

Lini Richarda Grol

Secularism and sharia in Nigeria

Bert den Boggende

In vols. 4-5 of Studies in Christian-Muslim Relations, Jan Boer discusses the views held of secularism: Muslims: Why We Reject Secularism (2005) and Christians: Secularism – Yes and No (2006), while in vols. 5-6 he reviews the perspectives on sharia: Muslims: Why Muslim Sharia Law (2007) and Christians: Why We Reject Muslim Law (2008). The topics are closely linked; in fact, secularism could be regarded as a subset of sharia.

Muslim perspectives

Both are part of a Muslim revival spirit that created new self-awareness that was upbeat, self-affirming, self-righteous, and very angry. They are partly a reaction against the colonialism that reduced their scope, introduced repugnant concepts, and undermined Islam. One such repugnant concept was secularism, a demonic virus. "From the Muslim perspective, the major context of the riots is the colonial imposition of a Christian-secular establishment that has deranged Nigerian Muslim spirituality and institutions." (1:77) Muslims often equate secularism with Christianity, who often equate it with neutrality, as in neutral education, neutral government. But as Boer points out, "neutral objectivity is a secular myth." (4:21) Since Christians and Muslims understand secularism differently, there is much confusion, misunderstanding and ignorance. Admittedly, some Muslims accept secularism, mainly those who lean towards a Marxist perspective. I don't discuss them any further, but it is important to realize that the Muslim community is not unified in its views. Most Muslims would characterize it as the supremacy of reason over divine revelation, the subordination of religion to temporal authority, and the elevation of material fulfillment over spiritual needs. They regard it as the great enemy and the antithesis of Islam. That the concept is foreign is apparent in that the Hausa don't have a term for it. For Muslims, humans are in the first place religious beings. For them, secularism trivializes religion, making it a private matter. While Christians favor a secular government, implied by the constitution, Muslims argue that secularism becomes the religion of a secular state, an ideology with an absolute set of values. Boer posits that "wholism" is the heart of Islam, meaning there can be no separation between the sacred and the profane. Human life is seen as an organic whole. Breaking this whole means assaulting the integrity of Islam and declaring war on Islam (4:99). Since secularism (like a red flag to a bull) is equated with the imperial West and Christianity, Muslims try to devise alternatives to government (democracy), education, etc. The "wall of separation" between church and state as formulated in Amendment 1 to the American Constitution is incomprehensible to faithful Muslims.

Christian perspectives

On secularism Muslims are closer to Kuyperians than many Christians, who, influenced by American missionaries, frequently hold dualistic views. This dualism is partly due to a Lutheran two kingdom theology (Boer sometimes sees Lutheran influence where there is none) and partly as a way to avoid Muslim domination. Put differently, secularism is their solution to protect their religion and their liberty. But what they mean exactly by secularism is not always clear. Boer provides two helpful definitions: secularity is the attitude of neutrality and indifference to religion and religious considerations; secularism is a philosophy that seeks to eradicate the concept of religion and all religious considerations from public life (5:26) It becomes evident that most Christians favor secularity rather than secularism, but Muslims are confused by the terminology and refuse to acknowledge the distinction. They have a point: the constitution seems

The 12 Nigerian states with Sharia law

to imply that religion is a private matter. Moreover, secularism has not procured long-term peace; in other words, it is not the solution Christians hoped it to be. It may be noted that tribal religion is also wholistic; thus Muslims are closer to the Nigerians' roots than many Christians. Part 2 of vol. 5 discusses the origin and nature of secularism, for which Boer has an interesting description; "chameleon ideology." Rather than discussing this chameleon ideology I want to invite the readers to comment on the terms secular, secularity and secularism.

Sharia, a way of life

Sharia, meaning "a straight path that leads to a certain destination," and secularism came to the fore in 1977 in the discussions of the Constituent Assembly. They were reinforced in 1986 by the debate about joining the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and the acceptance of sharia in 1999 by several northern states. Many readers think about sharia in connection with stoning, cutting off heads, etc. But the law aspect of sharia comprises only about 10 percent. Sharia is really a way of life, ordained by Allah and derived from the Quran, the Hadith and the Sunna and covers all of life, from political, social, economic, spiritual to intellectual spheres. It contains all legal injunctions for regulating conduct and is meant to shape life. While it preaches peace, justice, fairness and equality, its opponents don't see it that way. It is the state's duty to enforce sharia, although many Muslims ignore sharia in their daily life.

Sharia outlaws subservience and dependence, implying that Muslims must be masters and not servants. Politically this means that they should be the rulers of the country. This implies the subordination of Christians: their schools and hospitals would be taken over, they could not be full citizens, they would have no political rights, they could hold no key positions, they would be taxed more heavily, they would be treated as stateless. Moreover, Bibles would be prohibited, Christian literature would be banned, Christian activities would be curtailed and missionaries would be resisted.

The regulations include what kind of uniforms nurses can wear (western uniforms are indecent). Women's sportswear is also indecent. Western women's fashion, deemed to be degrading, touches upon the mixing of genders, morality, honor, and participation. For some, the failure to wear a hijab would lead strait to hell. Ignoring such rules is regarded as a form of destruction of Islam. When sharia was enacted in 1999 in Zamfara state, the governor made the growing of beards compulsory, thus linking sharia with extremism, such as the Taliban, and discriminating against those without beard.

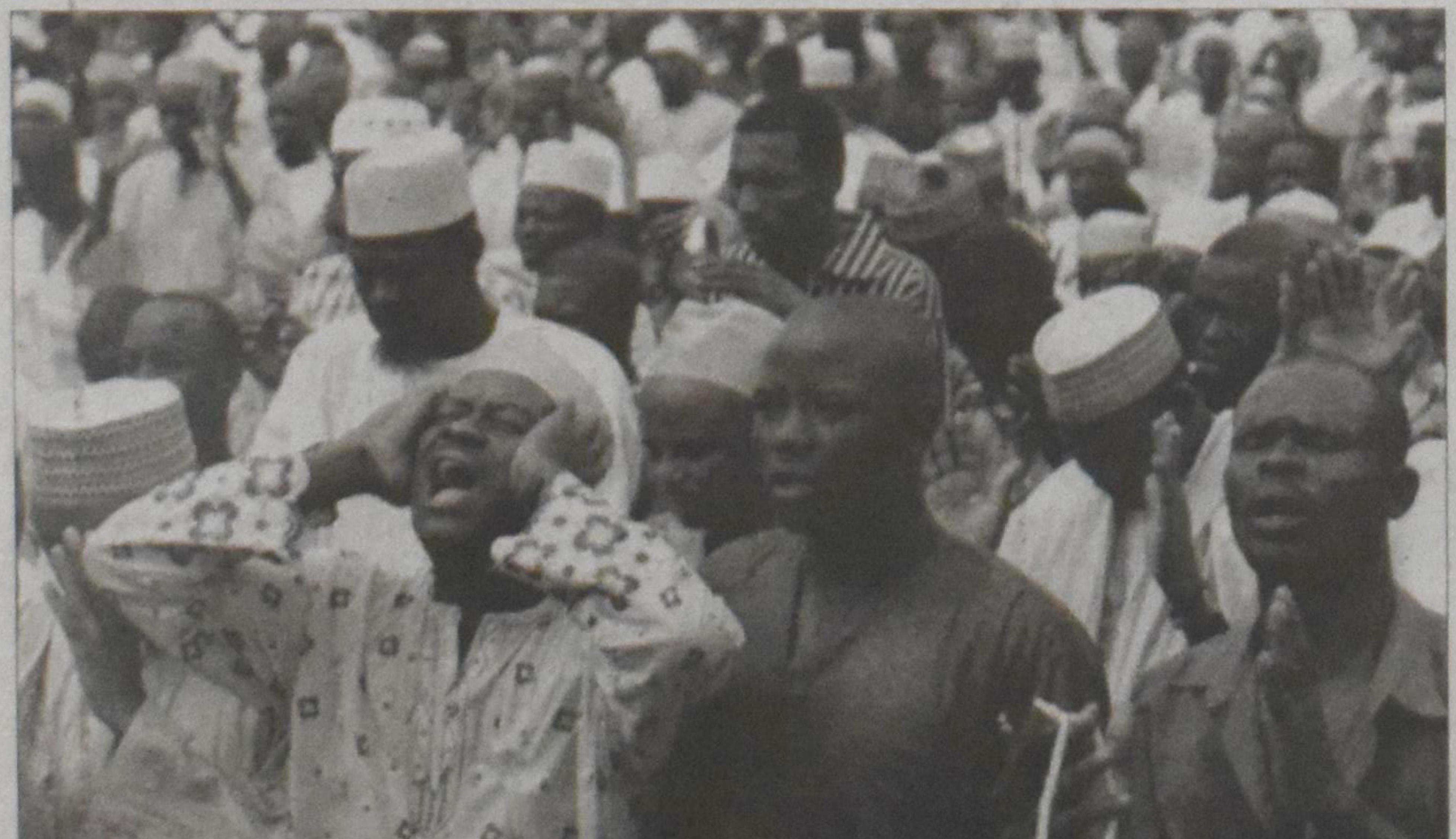
At the end of May 2009 some economic consequences became apparent when Standard & Poor introduced a sharia-compliant TSX index, deleting companies involved with alcohol, entertainment, pork-related products, tobacco and financial services. Muslims may not take interest and object therefore to capitalism, yet they expect to earn interest and invest in capitalistic enterprises!

Law may be a small portion of sharia, but it is important, especially since Allah has endeared law to mankind. Moreover, to submit to a law other than prescribed by Allah is to submit to another god beside Allah. Thus, when lawyers practise sharia, they are engaged in an act of worship. And it cannot be applied in a fragmentary manner. When properly practised, it elevates and purifies human conduct and gives unity and cohesion to human life. However, where society is prevented from adhering to sharia, it is prevented from exercising its full humanity. There is a legal problem with sharia, for it doesn't spell out exact punishments, which is left at discretion of sharia judges, who are often incompetent and corrupt. Some of the rules remind me of the rules the Pharisees instituted.

For Muslims sharia is fundamental to Islam: "There can never be true Muslims without sharia." (6:32) Boer does an admirable job showing how fundamental it is, yet at the same time indicates the various problems, not only with the Muslims themselves, but also for the Christians. From the few details I have provided it is understandable that Christians object to sharia, but it should not be forgotten that there has been considerable Muslim critique and opposition to sharia.

Recently *CC* carried an article arguing that "governments have a responsibility to legislate moral issues" (May 11). After reading Boer's volumes and knowing a little more about sharia one can't be so positive. From a Kuyperian perspective, the state should not be subject to the direct control of the church/mosque. In effect that is what sharia does. If you decide you can afford buying only one volume, I recommend vol. 6.

Bert den Boggende (bertdenb@yahoo.com) has a Ph.D in British history and is a retired teacher who still does some substituting. He lives in Brooks, Alberta



Lagos, Nigeria: Muslims attend prayers celebrating the end of Ramadan

Intangible Things
Heidi VanderSlikke

For the love of colour

I strolled through the racks of fall clothing, admiring the displays and wondering which pieces I should try on. A young salesclerk waltzed past, wearing a stylish gold cardigan over a black shirt and leggings. "Oh," I said to her, "That colour looks wonderful on you."

She smiled and twirled around so I could catch the full effect. "Isn't it great?" she said with a giggle. "It's a brand new shade. We just unpacked it this morning. It's called harvest gold."

I laughed. "Actually it's a throwback to the 70s," I said, realizing as I spoke that she wasn't even born then. "My dad had a favourite sweater that same colour." I didn't have the heart to tell her we once had kitchen appliances in the identical shade.

"You'd look good in this," she said, pulling a sweater like hers off the rack for me. I glanced at the flowing, asymmetrical hemline and the 4-inch patent leather belt that cinched her tiny waist. I had doubts. "Hmmm…" I said, as I pulled out a gold blouse in a less trendy style, "Maybe I'll try this one."

"I'll get a change room started for you," she said, with a glint in her eye.

I couldn't very well trouble her to start a change room for just one item. So I grabbed a deep purple sweater and a charcoal grey skirt and trotted behind her to the fitting room.

A few minutes later I stood at the cash register with all three pieces. Jack appeared at my side, his mission to find new running shoes accomplished. He slumped against the counter and surveyed my pile of garments. "You buying all that?" he asked, his eyebrows only slightly raised.

"Yep," I said. "The good news is: we're done." That brought a smile to his face.

As we drove home I happily pondered my new clothes. I wouldn't wear the purple sweater and the gold blouse together, of course. I hadn't seen that unlikely combination since South Lincoln High, where those were the official school colours. My mother would have referred to my selections as gaudy, (except for the charcoal skirt). I must have inherited my father's appreciation for vibrant hues.

An act of rebellion

When it came to fashion or decor, my parents stood worlds apart. Ma consistently chose elegant but subdued tones. She favoured beiges, creams, browns and off-whites. Since she did most of the shopping, that's what my dad wore. Once in awhile she'd get crazy and buy something with a subtle stripe in it.

Now and then Pa rebelled. He once came home with two new polo shirts – one canary yellow, the other scarlet red.

"Are you serious?" my mother asked.

"I'm tired of beige and boring," he answered. "I need a little flare!"

That fall he bought himself the harvest gold cardigan. Ma had misgivings. "You'll soon get tired of it," she warned. He didn't. He wore that sweater every evening when he came home from work. I found it years later, tucked in the back of my mother's closet when we moved her out of her house. Now I wear it around home in the winter. This year I'll be right in style.

I remember when my parents came home with a new suit for Pa. He proudly uncovered the soft grey wool jacket and trousers. Then he pulled the *piéce de résistance* from the bag – a lavender shirt and floral purple and yellow necktie. Not to be outdone, Ma pulled out her selection – standard white dress shirt with silver and black striped tie. "Conservative clothing never goes out of style," she said. Pa winked at me.

When my father died in 1976, Ma laid out his clothes for him one last time. She chose the grey suit and the vivacious lavender shirt and tie.

Jack and I rounded a corner when a splash of bright purple knapweed caught my eye – there in the ditch, boldly interrupting a profusion of golden rod. Here and there the first vivid signs of autumn tinged the trees. We traveled westward. The horizon throbbed with a crimson sunset. Smears of purple, gold, and orange oozed into each other just below the ceiling of violet clouds. The most creative window dressing in the world couldn't compare to this work of art.

I sighed contentedly and leaned back against the headrest. I guess it wasn't just my earthly father who handed down his passion for living colours. I can only imagine what the colours will be like in heaven.

Heidi Vander Slikke (vanderslikke@evers.ca) lives in Harriston, On.

It would have been enough

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

In *Radical Gratitude*, Mary Jo Leddy reflects on a Jewish prayer of gratitude sung at the celebration of Passover. As the prayer is sung, participants recall how God orchestrated the Israelite exodus from Egypt and how he led them through seemingly unconquerable obstacles until they arrived in the Promised Land. Leddy explains that "the refrain of this song is, in Hebrew, *Dayenu*, which can be translated as *It would have been enough*" (Orbis Books, 2002, pp. 54).

Leddy spells out what the prayer might consist of: "If you had only led us to the edge of the Red Sea but not taken us through the waters, *it would have been enough*. If you had only taken us through the Red Sea but not led us through the desert, *it would have been enough*. If you had only led us through the desert but not taken us to Sinai, *it would have been enough*. And so on. At any verse in the song, at any point in the history of liberation, it would have been enough to sing and praise God's name forever" (pp. 54-55).

Leddy suggests that "it is a helpful spiritual exercise to review one's own life and stop at any point with the grateful prayer *it would have been enough*" (pp. 55). Her proposal makes sense for any day of the year, but especially as we prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving. That's what I did, following the pattern that she suggests.

Allow me to share my spiritual reflections on God's goodness to me.

My prayer

If I had only been born but not had loving parents, *it would have been enough.*

If I had only had loving parents but not a healthy body and mind, *it would have been enough.*

If I had only a healthy body and mind but didn't receive a good education, *it would have been enough.*

If I had only received a good education but didn't have many friends, *it would have been enough.*

If I had only received many friends but had not met my husband Rinke, *it would have been enough.*

If I had only met Rinke but had not given birth to five children, *it would have been enough.*

If I had only given birth to five children but hadn't been able to give them an education, *it would have been enough.*

If I had only been able to give my children a good education but had not become a writer, *it would have been enough.*

If I had only become a writer but didn't have enough food to eat, *it would have been enough.*

If I had only enough food to eat but didn't watch my children fall in love and marry, *it would have been enough.*

If I had only been able to witness my children's weddings (three in 2009) but had not seen the great blue heron swoop over my neighbour's yard, *it would have been enough.*

If I had only seen the majestic heron but had not hiked with Rinke through a September landscape in brilliant sunshine, *it would have been enough.*

What is your prayer?

I could go on and on.

How about you? If you pursued this spiritual exercise, what would your Thanksgiving prayer look like? Of course it will be different than mine because no two lives are alike. But our prayers will be similar in that they will be directed to our good God because "every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows" (James 1:17).

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema is a freelance writer living in St. Catharines, ON. She has recently published her first children's picture book, Monzi and Mama's Stories, which can be ordered at sonyavf55@hotmail.com

Bienke's story (part VIII)

This is part seven of the life of Jacobina Wilhelmina Radsma, née Vlaar, as told to her daughter Marion. The series will continue in following issues.

In Halifax we enjoyed our first glimpse of Canada – it seemed very pleasant. All the houses up on the hills looked very fairy tale like. We boarded a train here to our next destination, Toronto. The train trip gave us a chance to see much more of the country. We marveled at the many glorious vistas of wilderness with which God had blessed Canada.

In Toronto's Union train station, my family was eagerly waiting for us to arrive – my brothers Jim and Simon with their wives Grietje and Fem and my bachelor brother Tony. They crammed us and our basic baggage into the three cars they'd had the foresight to take and drove us the last stretch of our long journey to our new home. It was midnight by this time, so we could not see much of the countryside. However, we did get our first taste of Canada. Midway between Toronto and St. Catharines, our sponsors and temporary hosts stopped the cars to initiate us into North American cuisine – we had our first hotdog. I can't say I liked it very much – a dry bun with a sausage stuck in the middle.

We never were homesick or wanted to go back. We had experienced the Lord in Holland but we also felt him very strongly in Canada. We were quite poor those first years, but somehow we never lacked for anything; we always had enough clothes to wear, food to eat, beds to sleep in and, most important, love to warm us. And, even without a car to take us places that first year, we made it to church twice every Sunday; we followed in

Tongues as of fire

They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. Acts 2:3

A. Kuyper

Kings wear a crown and queens a diadem; geniuses are given laurels and athletes trophies. Even those without royal blood, or those who are neither a genius nor an athlete, strive for honour, glory or distinction. Most people strive for the top honour in their own field and feel a quickened heartbeat when honour is bestowed. Is such an inclination sinful? Should it be discouraged? Should a child of God reject such desire for glory?

The apostle Paul answers with a resounding, "NO!" He admits without embarrassment that he himself is waiting for a crown of glory, now that he has become an apostle of Jesus Christ, and that he works hard to obtain that crown – moreover, that hope of receiving a crown motivates him in the struggle. However, he does not expect to receive this crown in the present life but at its fulfillment – and this makes all the difference. Nor will this crown be placed on his head by a friend, but by the righteous Judge himself. Even more importantly, the crown will not bring apparent vainglory but will truly make him a king, for he has "made us kings and priests unto God and his Father" (Revelation 1:6).

For we know that there are two kinds of light, two kinds of glory and two kinds of brilliance.

The first kind of brilliance from here below is ignited by the fire of our heart's desire, stirred into life by the enticement of honour and reflected in the glow of metal and precious stones. Such a brilliance comes from artificial light, and its radiance will soon fade. It flickers momentarily as a reflection and is then extinguished. But there is another kind of brilliance which does not come from the earth below but from above, from the Father of Light, from the depth of the realm of eternal glory, radiating to us from the Eternal Invisible One. His glory surpasses the brightness of the sun, and no eternity of ages can extinguish its light.

Those whose eyes are captured by the brilliance of earthly lights, will be blind to the glory which radiates from above. It does not hold their attention because they have not even noticed it.

The opposite effect is also possible. A sinner who has been saved and begins to long for that nobler brilliance soon finds the earthly glow lose its sparkle. He turns away from it, no longer entranced by its glory. Its brilliance, once so desirable, now appears but dark and gloomy in comparison.

Not just an image

Please note well that we are not just using metaphor; we are talking of realities.

If you try to imagine Christ in all his glory it is impossible to think of him with dull or lackluster features. In your mind you have to imagine him as radiant, crowned by soft and holy light, glorious with radiance greater than that of diamonds. This is not just a matter of the imagination but the reality of the radiance of Christ's inner being. His divine person is revealed to those around him and the aroma of his anointed body is spread abroad.

Scripture tells us that even Moses, the mediator in the Old Covenant, came down from the mountain with a face so radiant and so bright that no one could bear to look at it, and he had to cover his face in order to speak to the people (Exodus 34:33). That is why, from its very earliest days, the church of Jesus had the custom of portraying the prophets, patriarchs, martyrs and saints with a halo around their heads. Thus these saints were shown to be pure of heart. They had ascended the mountain of God's holiness, and they had received a reflection of the radiance that surrounds the Eternal One.

It is sometimes said of saintly god-fearing, blessed people who are placed like beacons of light in the midst of the congregation that one finds something celestial shining from their eyes, and their faces have an expression of holiness. They seem like the angels, messengers from heaven, who never appeared on earth except with the radiant glow of holiness shining from their faces and clothing, blinding like lightning.

So also, when it pleases the Lord to remove one of us from our midst after completing his struggle on earth to enter into the peace of the Lord, one often hears the remark that even on his deathbed one can see an otherworldly radiance on his face, enough to make any bystander jealous as well as happy.

Finally, is there any difference from what happened on Pentecost, when people saw *tongues of fire* on the heads of all gathered there, and the experience of the disciples at the transfiguration on mount Tabor?

Be careful how you shine

On mount Tabor the Lord was crowned and shone with the radiance of heavenly glory (Luke 9:28-36), and on Pentecost the believers gathered as a congregation, were baptised with that same radiance of glory and received the heavenly diadem of light on their forehead, as if they were princes and rulers. Once in possession of this heavenly crown, those who have been redeemed by Jesus would never be tempted to desire any other kind of earthly crown or garland.

Thus when the church of Jesus Christ becomes too much enthralled with human honour and glory she *diminishes*; and she *grows* in spiritual power when the radiance of earthly glory pales, and tongues of heavenly fire as a spiritual diadem of light, are once more seen on the heads of believers.

The cross of Jesus has no power, and the blood of reconciliation has no effect, when those who kneel at the cross are adorned with crowns and laurels given by those who are their companions in sin. But the cross gives blessing and the blood is affective to save if those who kneel at the cross first remove their jewels, crowns and laurels and throw these at the foot of the cross.

And so I ask you, my brothers, my sisters, what makes you shine? What is it about you that glitters? Is it based on human glittering? Then be fearful for your soul. If you are receiving only human honour and glory you are not walking in faith and will perish. Then your life is no more than a clanging cymbal, a shallow glittering, and the heavenly dew of the eternal morning does not reflect in your face.

Well now, did you receive a Pentecost blessing? If so, allow the fiery tongues to be seen on you, and allow the expression of heavenly glory to shine from your face. That light is not harsh but soft, and it does not glitter but reflects kindness and care.

Tongues of fire showing on each of us would be the most wonderful sermon of God's gracious mercy and love. It would also be a gracious example when a deathbed is marked by the soft light of grace. Such a deathbed will be like mount Tabor, a place of transition into the heavenly Jerusalem, this time through the dark portal of death.

This meditation by Abraham Kuyper has been translated by Jack Van Meggelen (jack@vanmeggelen). Jack lives in Willowdale, Ontario.

Painting: *Joseph Ignaz Mildorfer "Pentecost" detail (1750s)*

---

our fathers' footsteps. Yes, we were well provided for.

The five of us stayed with my brother Simon and his family for two weeks – quite a full house for them! We soon found a farm to work and to live on. Later we referred to this house as the 'skunken' house because there always seemed to be skunks living under the house. Oh, what a smell! We had to leave there before the weather turned cold since the building was not properly winterized.

We established ourselves in another place on yet another farm ('the Culp farm' in Vineland, across from the Vineland Experimental Farm); this place didn't stink – it leaked everywhere, even during mild showers! Once an old school house, it had been converted to a residence for use by the farmer's hired hand. When it rained, water poured through holes everywhere. I had to set up seven or eight pails throughout the building just to keep up with the flood.

I still did not know much English when I went into the hospital the following spring for the birth our son, Frans (or Frank as he liked to be called), born on the 28th of May, 1955. Spring came early that year; I still remember the taste of the first picked strawberries that were brought to me in the hospital. The flavour was wonderful, but oh, poor Frank! What a terrible rash he developed. So, since I was breast-feeding, no more strawberries for me that year!... And it ended up being poor me!

When his grandfather Opa Radsma heard that I had delivered a son, he could not

contain his excitement and started dancing around in the living room, chanting over and over: "Het is een zoon! Het is een zoon! God zij gepreesd, het is een zoon!" Translated, this means: "It's a son! It's a son! God be praised, it's a son!" (Between the offspring of his sons Tjeerd and Adam, of course, he already had four Radsma granddaughters.)

He was even prouder when we named the baby after him. I immediately wrote all our relations in Holland to tell them: "see, you have to come to Canada to get a son!" Frank was the first baby to be baptized in Maranatha Christian Reformed Church, the new church building our community had built on Scott St. in St. Catharines – two other babies were baptized at Maranatha that morning, but Frank was first. Our family was even more perfect now. God was so good to us. Adam always had work. In addition, he was able to moonlight on most holidays to earn some extra money for his family. With three young children and a father-in-law to take care of, I stayed home to cook, clean and sew the children's wardrobes.

To be continued in following issues.

Can a gadget change your life?

Sometime after I turned 40, I managed to pack on 20 pounds of pure fat.

1 Corinthians 6:19 tells us the body is the temple of the Lord. If that's true, then I had added several new wings, a multipurpose room and some additional parking to my temple.

It wasn't pretty, or healthy. In March, I went to see my doctor about shortness of breath, thinking I had contracted a respiratory illness on a recent visit to China. He was blunt: "I think you have a touch of asthma, Lloyd, but mostly, you're just an out-of- shape, middle-aged guy."

Like most people who get such news, I was flabbergasted (with a capital "flab," I might add). I had always been in shape, and hadn't changed my diet much, so how could this be? Yet after looking carefully at what I was eating and what I wasn't doing, I realized that I had picked up a number of bad habits at a time in my life when my metabolism was slowing down.

Luke 12:22 tells us: "Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on." Clearly, I had taken some liberties with this instruction. Not being "anxious" needs to be balanced against being made in God's image and exercising discipline self-control, too.

And here is where, like many people, I fail miserably. When it comes to chips, or popcorn, or salty snacks, or red wine, or cheese, I have no self control. When it comes to exercise, I have no discipline. I am naturally self- indulgent and lazy.

I'm also cynical.

Looking at my excess weight, and knowing just how hard I'd have to work to get rid of it, I didn't think it would be possible – for me, at least – to do it.

But I made an effort. Because I realized that I owed it to Cameron, my five-year-old son, to be as healthy as possible for as long as possible, so that we could enjoy our lives together to the fullest.

At one point, on one of our visits to the gym, Cameron said to the girl behind the counter: "My dad is here so he can keep up with me."

Out of the mouths of babes, as the Psalmist says.

Corporations to the rescue

And predictably, despite my half-hearted attempts at change, I saw no results.

Until, in an answer to prayer, two multinational corporations – Nike and Apple – provided me with a gadget that changed my life.

The Nike+ system has two parts: the first is a sensor that fits inside your Nike shoe. The second is a receiver that plugs into your Apple iPod. As you run, the sensor records your speed and sends it to the receiver, which stores it on your iPod. When you connect the iPod to your computer, the data is dumped to your Nike+ account, where you can see all kinds of interesting data about your run: your average pace, your calories burned, your overall improvement since your last run, and so on.

When you achieve a personal best, the system rewards you.

I practically jumped out of my skin when I first heard the words: "Hi, this is Tiger Woods ... that was your longest workout yet! Congratulations!"

Generally speaking, I am skeptical – *extremely* skeptical – when companies claim that their product is "the answer" to any of your needs.

In this case, the product worked for me. But not, as you might suspect, because it made me a better person. Quite the opposite.

It worked because it appealed to instincts even more base than sloth and gluttony. It appealed to my need to quantify my achievements and keep statistics. It satisfied my vanity and my need for positive reinforcement. It leveraged my obsessive-compulsive personality into self-improvement. In short – to mangle the baptismal form – it didn't avert my evil — it turned it to my profit.

As of now, I am running 30 kilometers a week and have lost almost all of the 20 extra pounds. I feel better, more alert and more energetic, too. My heart rate and blood pressure have dropped, and I look forward to exercise, now. In fact, I am planning to run my first-ever half-marathon later this Fall – which is a significant improvement over huffing and puffing up the stairs of my house in the Spring.

All because a particular gadget used questionable means to achieve a higher end.

Which got me thinking. What I need next is a gadget that will use my restlessness, to earn my soul more rest. Or a product that will use my selfishness to make me unselfish. Or an application that will turn all the sorrow I carry with me into dancing.

I realize, upon writing this, that the answer is simple. That for all of us, the thing that will most change out lives is right before us.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." – Matthew 10:28-30

Talk about a reward worth earning – the ultimate "personal best."

Lloyd Rang (Lloyd.rang@rogers.com) is a member of Rehoboth CRC in Bowmanville, Ontario.

Tinkering with the Christian mission to the Muslim world

The missionary outreach to the Muslim world has been characterized by controversy and disagreement within the Christian Church. This subject has taken a new turn with the rise of the so-called Insider Movement.

The Insider Movement arose out of an attempt to be sensitive to the cultural, political, and social environment of Muslims who are approached with the Christian Gospel. Such an effort is laudable, but, as history has shown, it has a tendency to water down the Gospel. In this case it has led some to insist that there are many similarities in the teachings of the Koran and the Bible.

One of the major advocates of the Insider Movement is John Travis, a man who has developed a scheme describing six different types of followers of Christ. One of them (C5) holds that Muslims can become followers of Christ while remaining in their Muslim community – hence the term Insider – continue to attend the mosque, participate in the fast, and recite the *Shahadah* (Allah is the one God, and Muhammad is his prophet). They are sometimes called Messianic Muslims.

Asking the right question

One of those who challenge the "Insider" view is the Rev. Bassam Madany. Madany, who was born in Syria, preached the Gospel to the Arab world for 35 years. His *Bible and Islam* (1979, 2003), and *An Introduction to Islam*, co-authored with his late wife Shirley (2006), are suffused with biblical wisdom.

Madany recently joined the debate about the Christian mission to the Muslim world in an article "The New Christians of North Africa & the Insider Movement," available on the website http://www.unashamedofthegospel.org/the_new_christians.cfm

The following is a summary of that article.

He begins with one important question. How do the new converts from Islam to Christianity themselves view their conversion? He writes that reports on "reformist" Arabic websites as well as in the European media indicate that the new converts are bold and forthright in their witness and enthusiasm about their newfound faith.

At a conference devoted to "The Defense of Minorities and Women," held in March 2007 in Zurich, a lecturer reported that a considerable number of North African Muslims have embraced the Christian faith. The weekly journal, *Jeune Afrique*, devoted three reports about such conversions in Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria.

The same lecturer mentioned that one factor that led Muslims to convert to Christianity was "the violence of the fundamentalist Islamist movements." A Christian evangelist working in Algeria stated that people were shocked to discover that Islam was capable of unleashing terror and horrific massacres in the 1990s. Many people asked: Where is Allah? Some Algerians committed suicide, others went mad, some became atheists, and still others turned to Christianity.

Another factor that led Muslims to become Christians is the biblical message that God is a God of love. They were overwhelmed by the reality that God loves them and that the Messiah died on the cross and rose again to reconcile sinners with their heavenly Father. This message was especially of significance for women, who are seen in Islam as the embodiment of evil and must, therefore, be punished for the simplest act.

No regrets

Madany translated a news item posted on the Arabic-language website, *Aafaq* (*Horizons*) on April 24, 2009, about the conversion of an Algerian policeman and his daughter. Despite being accused of having committed a capital offence, this man testified about his newly-won sense of freedom and peace after embracing the Christian faith. His daughter explained that her reason for becoming a Christian, *"was due to her feeling that Islam treated women as maids and concubines, only to be sexually exploited by men. Muslim men regard women only from a physical point of view. Now, having embraced Christianity, she began to feel as a dignified human being. Her decision is final, and she does not regret it at all."*

Madany comments that these courageous Christians, who are not afraid to profess their faith openly within a hostile environment, are a powerful testimony against those who say that they need not call themselves Christians nor stop their former Islamic practices.

As an Eastern Christian, who spent most of his life bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to the followers of Islam, Madany urges his readers to pay careful attention to the biblical directives on missions. He writes that he cannot hide his joy when he hears about the rebirth of the Christian Church in North Africa, and he praises God for the boldness of these new Christians who are not ashamed of the Cross of their Saviour.

In considering the Insider Movement in the light of the biblical message, we do well to pay careful attention to the testimony of this seasoned, Arabic-speaking missionary to the Muslim world.

Harry Antonides (hantonides@sympatico.ca) retired as director of the former Work Research Foundation. He lives in Willowdale, Ontario.

A child's act of mercy

Our middle child, daughter Jacoba, was three years old when we found out that her mom, my wife Marisa, was diagnosed with cancer. As her parents, we wondered how we were to tell our three-year-old what cancer was, what it meant, what chemotherapy is and what was ahead?

We started with telling the kids that heaven is a great place.

The truth is we didn't really know where to start ourselves. We had enough questions of our own, let alone feeling confident enough to shepherd our three children through the unknown of what was to come.

Call upon me and I will answer you.
I will be with you in trouble; I will deliver and honour you.
With long life I will satisfy you and show you my salvation.

Our children liked talking about heaven. It allowed their imagination to run free and come up with interesting and thought-provoking questions. We told the kids that heaven is one of the places where Jesus lives, and that we are all going to live there one day, and that in heaven there is no crying. There are no sisters that annoy us and no brothers that take the last piece of bacon when the parents aren't looking.

Wipe away those tears.
There will be no more death, anguish, sorrow or mourning.
No more grief or pain.
The old conditions and former order of things will pass away.
There will be no more cancer.

A few days after diagnosis, chemotherapy was scheduled, and a week later it had begun. The stage of a cancer is a descriptor, numbers 1-4, of how much the cancer has spread. The stage often takes into account the size of a tumor, how deeply it has penetrated, whether it has affected any neighbouring organs, how many lymph nodes it has metastasized into (if any), and whether it has spread to distant organs. Staging of cancer is important because the stage at diagnosis is the most powerful predictor of survival, and treatments are often changed based on the stage. For Marisa it was stage 4, so she was in for aggressive and frequent chemotherapy.

At this point, the children still didn't seem to know what was happening. Mommy was still around and, even though there were 3 or 4 days per week that she went to the hospital, she still walked, talked and didn't look any different. Until the long, once healthy hair started to come out.

But if a woman has long hair, it is her ornament and glory.

Before long, all of Marisa's hair was gone. The kids, especially Jacoba, who had long beautiful locks of her own, took notice. Marisa often wore a toque to keep warm, a Vancouver Canucks toque that our son now proudly wears amongst all of his Toronto Maple leaf cheering friends.

Then one day Marisa came home with a wig. That captured Jacoba's attention. Our three-year-old didn't understood what cancer meant until she saw her mom with no hair left. And then a wig! How was that possible?

Jacoba asked many questions about the wig. When she found out that other people, other *healthy* people, donate their hair for people who need a wig, she, possibly for the first time, understood grace.

As a now surviving parent, one of the main concepts I want my children to understand is that our community were the hands and feet of Jesus and that we could have been lost without them.

So when Marisa died and Jacoba said that she wanted to grow her hair for a wig for someone else that had cancer, it seemed to be the right thing to do for our greater community. It had been growing for two years until this week. And then in a five-second cut, it went from waist length to shoulder length. An organization called Wigs for Kids took 13 inches of Jacoba's healthy hair and is going to use it to make a wig for someone who needs it.

For not a hair will fall from your head without my will.

Mendelt Hoekstra (mendelt.hoekstra@gmail.com) is the founder and director of the Music Therapy program at Bethesda, an organization that supports adults with developmental possibilities. He lives near St. Catharines, Ont. with his three children.

The Emerging Millennials – a review

***The Emerging Millennials* by Reinald W. Bibby**
reviewed by Brett Alan Dewing

For 25 years now, Reginald Bibby has been providing Canada with crucial data from his Project Canada and Project Teen Canada surveys. For his latest teen poll, Bibby surveyed 5,564 Canadians between the ages of 15 and 19, including an intentional oversampling of 818 teens from Aboriginal schools. He publishes the results in his book, *The Emerging Millennials*.

The rumours have been greatly exaggerated

Reading Bibby's findings can be a truly refreshing experience, surprising for a 200-page book of statistics. The reason is that the numbers show some very unexpected attitudes among today's teenagers: those of optimism, hope, relationship priority and conventional expectations.

As Bibby sums it up, "Let no one accuse the emerging millennials of being a morose and discouraged generation. That might describe a number of commentators, but it certainly does not describe millennials."

Taking into account the universal teen experience and the prevailing cultural messages sent their way, it is truly heartening to hear that teens today tend to be happy and feel safe at school and home.

89 percent of teenagers claim that drugs are easily accessible, but only 32 percent use marijuana and 12 percent use other illegal drugs. While these numbers are much higher than preferable, I think most of us expect them to be higher in reality.

'Everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial.'

What may be the most shocking of discoveries is that while they tend to be accepting of many things, teens are not themselves apt to be engaged in behaviour worse than that of their parents.

What Bibby's statistics show is that in the past decade teen sexual activity has declined and the number of teenage virgins has increased. Teens are not very likely to engage in sex outside of what they view to be a love relationship. Students in religious schools and those who are regularly involved in a religious community are much less likely to engage in sex and have traditionally conservative sexual mores.

Overall, while acceptance for sexual practices has risen, today's teens are less sexually active than their parents were at their age. (For the record, 44 percent of teens claim to be sexually active, with Ontario's youth least likely to be having sex.)

Bibby has been conducting these surveys regularly for decades, but the trends of today's youth demanded that he expand the moral viewpoint options from "Approve" and "Disapprove" to also include "Disapprove but Accept". (This third attitude he christens "The Canadian Way".)

The statistics of approval for premarital sex (see sidebar) may seem shocking, but only half of those students are acting on that approval. Also of note is the fact that while 44 percent approve of same-sex activity (a number that has declined in the last decade), 47 percent approve of same-sex marriage – an unaccountable variation.

Another surprising set of findings involves the goals and expectations of teenagers. 90 percent expect to marry, and 88 percent plan on staying with that partner for life. Not only that, but 94 percent want children, with 45 percent of females and 40 percent of males planning on staying at home to raise them. So much for the death of the family!

Where does God rate?

The most alarming findings have to do with religion. Two out of three teens believe in God or "a higher power" and that he (or it) cares for them personally. Four in ten claim to felt the presence of God themselves. However, only three in ten pray weekly or more.

More than half acknowledge spiritual needs and believe in miraculous healing and a heavenly reward. But while 7 in 10 identify with a religious tradition, only 2 in 10 attend weekly services. And they seem to still be ignorant of religious teachings. Less than third knew that the Koran was Islam's holy book, and only 11 percent could identify Abraham as Judaism's founding father.

Bibby examines the state of religion in the following paragraph.

"Religious groups in particular have not been accustomed to having to take a number. Many if not most have underestimated the importance of demonstrating to young people why it is worth their time to participate. Those that used to rely on deference and duty and loyalty are being increasingly ignored. Yet, the good news for such bodies is that a surprising number of teenagers indicate that they are open to greater involvement – *if* they can find that it's worthwhile."

CANADIAN TEENS AND SEX

Premarital sex when people love each other: 72% approve, 19% disapprove but accept, and only 9% disapproving and not accepting

Premarital sex when people "like" each other: 38% approve, 37% disapprove but accept, 25% disapprove and don't accept

Extramarital sex: 5% approve, 17% disapprove but accept, 78% disapprove and don't accept

Sexual relations between two people of the same sex: 44% approve, 28% disapprove but accept, 28% disapprove and don't accept

Classifieds

Anniversaries

1959 St. Thomas 2009

With praise to our Heavenly Father
for his gracious and loving care
we are thankful to announce
the **50th Anniversary**
of our parents and grandparents

Henry and Cynthia Smit (nee Booy)

Married on October 10, 1959.
"Congratulations" Mom and Dad, and
may God continue to bless you and keep you.

With love and best wishes,
Tom and Margriet Smit, *Sarnia*
Trish Wolting, *Chatham*
Bill and Kathy Vanderlinde, *Camlachie*
Brian and Dianne Smit, *Townsend*
Jeff and Bonnie Smit, *Wyoming*
Dan Smit, *St. Thomas*
and your 20 grandchildren!

Friends and family are invited to join us
in celebrating this occasion
at an **Open House**
on Saturday, Oct. 24, 2009 D.V. from 2-4 p.m.
St. Thomas First Christian Reformed Church
Elm St., St. Thomas

Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right hand.
You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will take me into glory.
Psalm 73:23, 24

Address: 790 Elm St
St Thomas ON N5R 1L5

1959 October 8 2009

It is with much love that
your children and grandchildren
celebrate with you

Frank and Elizabeth DeJong
(nee **Heida**)

your **50th Wedding Anniversary**

With love:

Femmy & Jamie – Tyler, Ryan

Hessel

John

Jake & Tracy – Nathan, Seth

Brenda

Home address: 233 Oxford St
Ingersoll ON N5C 2V8
Phone: 519-485-3657

Building on God's Faithfulness Celebrating 60 Years

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
in Bowmanville, Ontario

Everyone who has been a part of the Rehoboth "family" during the past 60 years
is invited to share in our **Celebration service** being held on
Sunday, **October 18th** at 6:30 p.m.
Please join us for food and fellowship after the service.
For further information call Chris in the church office at
905-623-5032 or rehobothcrc@bellnet.ca

Obituary

Odoorn, Drente
May 14, 1922

Townsend, ON
Sept. 8, 2009

Jannes Eising

Entered into his Father's glory, whose praises he loved to sing and
is now singing around God's throne.

"Still all my song shall be,
Nearer My God to Thee,
Nearer my God to Thee, Nearer to Thee!"

Beloved husband of Jansje (nee Mulder)
for almost 60 years.
Dear father of:
Henry and Maria Eising, *Abbotsford, B.C.*
Angela & DR, Jacqueline & Grant,
Jerry, Andrew
Nelda and Matt Renkema, *Blenheim, ON*
Justin & Katherine, Heidi, Kevin & Ashley
Rita Kostaluk, *Tumbler Ridge, B.C.*
Wesley, Jonathan, Philip
Arnold and Karen Eising, *Jarvis, ON*
Melanie, Shari & Ryan, Karina
Melinda and John Snider, *Simcoe, ON*
Heather & Lanny, Stephen, Robin & Nolan
Loving Opa of 16 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren.
Brother/brother-in-law of Trijn Nykamp, Henry & Lena Eising,
Riny Eising, Betty Eising, Teetske Mulder, Riek Mulder,
Minke Verwer and Neeltje Huisman.
Predeceased by his grandson Jerome Eising,
son-in-law Len Kostaluk, daughter-in-law Helen Eising,
siblings Willem Eising, Alice Vis and John Eising

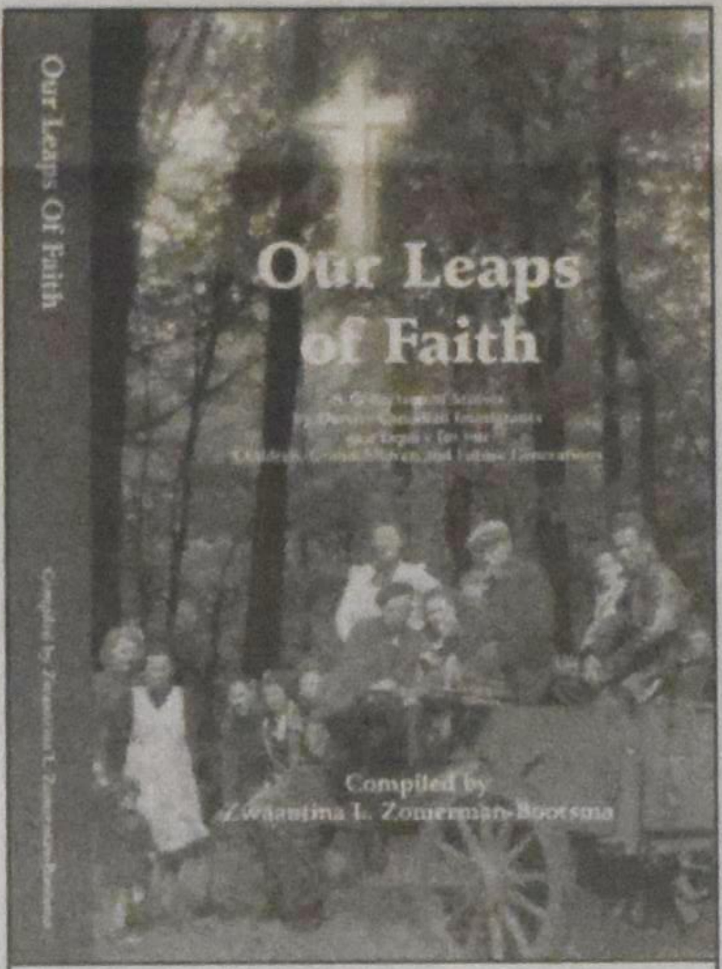
Visitation was at the Cooper Funeral Home, Jarvis, ON
and the funeral service was held at the Jarvis CRC with the meditation,
"Saved by Grace" from Eph. 2:4-9

Correspondence: 305 Brookview – 72 Towncentre Dr, Townsend ON N0A 1S0

Holidays

Holiday accomodation
in Holland
with vehicle rentals and tours.
www.chestnutlane.nl

LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA
Coming to Alberta? Stay in one of our
cozy cottages.
Contact Ernst & Louise Sluijmers
403-329-8181 www.elbas.com



OUR LEAPS OF FAITH
(A GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFT)

A Collection of Stories by Dutch-Canadian Immigrants as a legacy for our children, grandchildren and future generations compiled by Zwaantina L. Zomerman-Bootsma. Price: $18.95 plus shipping and handling, 335 pages.

Place your order by contacting:
Tina Bootsma at
Ph. 780-469-1845;
Email: tina.bootsma@shaw.ca

If you would like to see your story in print, send it to me by Aug. 31/10.

Mailing address is:
6604-94A Ave
Edmonton AB T6B 0YB

Unique Oak European Furniture
at the

Imported from
Belgium & Holland
Couches, Chairs
Tables, Wall Units
Decorative Items
'Dutch Bikes'

'Old World' Craftsmanship & Comfort

'pop in & enjoy a cup of coffee'

app'ts/info call: **905 563-0209** **Herman & Janny Dunnink**
51383 Hewitt Rd. Wainfleet hjdunnink@hotmail.com

Planning a Gift to Charity?

Call CSS for impartial, confidential,
and **free** professional advice
across Canada.

Connecting Donors, Charities & Ministries

Christian Stewardship Services
1-800-267-8890 | **admin@csservices.ca**
www.csservices.ca

We launched our
new website.
Check us out at
christiancourier.ca

Celebrate

30 Years of Service

The Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools invites you to the
retirement dinner and celebration for

Dr. Adrian Guldemond

Friday, November 27th, 2009
Cost $40/person

at Kings Christian Collegiate
528 Burnhamthorpe Road West, Oakville, Ontario.

5:30 p.m. Social, 6:00 p.m. Dinner (semi-formal)

RSVP by November 13, 2009
For payment options and to reserve your tickets,
contact Samantha at 905-648-2100 or samanthab@oacs.org

ONTARIO ALLIANCE OF CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS
790 Shaver Road, Ancaster ON L9G 3K9
t. 905-648-2100 f. 905-648-2110
OACS oacs@oacs.org www.oacs.org

Leendert Kooij and the OCMA choir, Quartet and Brass do a

BENEFIT CONCERTS for EUROVANGELISM.
October 17 Hebron CRC, 4240 Anderson St. Whitby 7:30 p.m.
October 24 St. George's Anglican Church, 99 Woolwich St, Guelph, 7:30 p.m.
See *http://eurovangelism.ca*

Travel/For Sale/Jobs

Classified Rates

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION: *Christian Courier* is published on the second and fourth Mondaysof each month. Copy deadline for each issue is 9 a.m. Tuesday, 13 days prior to publication date.

RATES: All personal and family announcements: $6.00 per sq. in.
email **rose@christiancourier.ca**
Display advertising re. businesses and organizations: $8.00 per sq. in.
email: **ads@christiancourier.ca**

PHOTOS: There is a processing fee of $25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged P.I., but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. We need either an original photo (which we will return) or a downloadable internet image.

PERSONAL ADS: *Christian Courier* would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is $25. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at $8 P.I. per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.

SUBMITTING YOUR AD
email: see above
Mail: Christian Courier, 5 Joanna Dr
St. Catharines ON L2N 1V1

OTHER INFORMATION
Christian Courier reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format and editing style.

For issue dates, deadlines, events, contact information, recently run job ads and more, see http://christiancourier.ca

Boterkoek - Buttercake

300 grams flour
250 grams butter
250 grams (fine) berry sugar
½ tsp salt
1 egg
50 grams sliced blanched almonds

Put flour, sugar, salt and butter into a mixing bowl. Using two knives, cut the butter into tiny pieces, while mixing it in with the flour, sugar and salt. Sprinkle flour on your hands and knead the mix into a dough. Set aside for ten minutes. Butter a round pie pan and press the dough into it. Lightly beat the egg and brush it on top of the cake, sprinkle with almonds. With a knife trace a diamond pattern in the top.

Bake the cake for 20 to 25 minutes on the middle rack in a preheated oven at 200°C/395°F till the outside is brown and crispy-like and the inside still soft.

Recipe from *www.godutch.com*

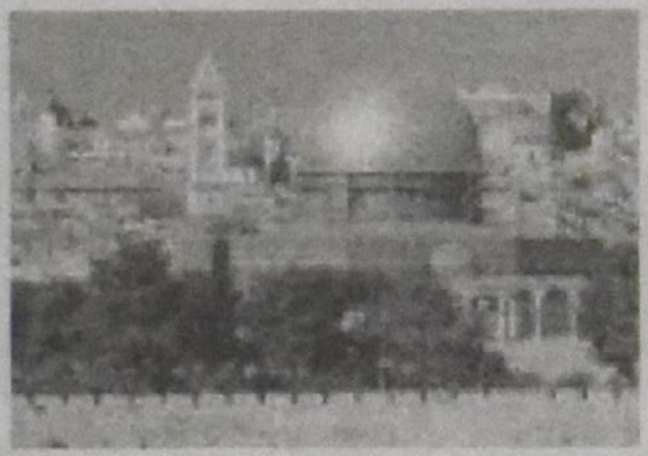
---

14 nights
Greek Islands & Mediterranean Cruise
Depart May 1, 2010

Visit: Venice,Dubrovnik, Ephesus, Santorini, Curfu, Split, Athens, Mykonos,Katakolon.

Join us for Christian Fellowship,Devotions & Sing alongs
Sundays Worship services provided
From $ 1708.84 us.Includes all taxes
Limited Space BOOK today. Ship Board Credit $ 100.00
Hosted by Ralph & Grace Visscher
Christian Guided Tours **1-800-811-2388**

ISRAEL - HOLY LAND JOURNEY
with Pastor William Koopmans of Grace Christian Reformed Church
February 2 - 11, 2010



Vellinga's Travel Service
244 Queen Steet, Chatham ON
Details can be found on our website
www.vellingastravel.com
Phone **519-352-5150**
Toll Free **1-877-352-5150**
Ont. Reg. # 50016006

★ **39 YEARS OF SERVICE** ★

CRC EXTENSION FUND
"...serving Christian Reformed churches and Christian schools since 1970"

Your funds will be invested in Christian Reformed Church and Christian school building projects in Canada.

New rates to December 31, 2009
We pay **2.75%** on CRC deposits.
Earn approx. **3.0%** on RRSP/RRIF/TFSA

Write: Christian Reformed Extension Fund
45 Harriet St, Toronto ON M4L 2G1
Email: harry@crcextensionfund.org
Call: **416-461-1207** **Fax**: 416-465-6367

Job Opportunity

Maple Reinders
Build your future with a top 50 Best Employer
BEST SMALL & MEDIUM EMPLOYERS IN CANADA

Executive Assistant, Mississauga ON

Maple Reinders Constructors Ltd, recognized as one of Canada's top 50 employers for 2009 by Queen's University School of Business, is a full-service Design/Build and Construction Management firm specializing in industrial/commercial/institutional facilities, municipal infrastructure and environmental projects. We strive for technical distinction, professionalism, quality workmanship and ultimately, for integrity in building excellence.

We are looking for a high energy, professional to provide administrative support to the President and the Sr. Management team as well as manage office services, supervise Reception and provide support to Sales/ Marketing, Human Resources and Health & Safety.

This is a senior position with lots of variety. The ideal candidate will have superior computer skills, be extremely well organized, able to multi-task, have a strong code of ethics, and 5 years senior administrative experience. Knowledge of the construction industry would be a definite asset.

Please send your resume and cover letter to:
By email: hr@maple.ca
By Fax: 905-821-4822

Additional information about Maple Reinders can be found at:
www.maple.ca

People, Passion, Performance

---

valentine
A Division of Merit Vacations

Be comfortable this winter
Long stay brochure available-
Europe, USA, Caribbean.
Portugal - 28 nights from 1690.00 incl. air from Toronto
Bali - 29 days from 1949.00 incl. air from Vancouver
Taxes extra

Mississauga 905-890-5333 or 1-800-268-6144
London 519-472-2700 or 1-800-265-1141
TICO Registration #4499356

Low Interest Rates?

Ever considered a charitable *GIFT ANNUITY?*

Sex and Age	Rate /amount	Charitable receipt	Tax Free	Taxable
Male 70	5.97% $1,194	$5,791	$1,084	$110
Female 75	6.20% $1240	$6,010	$1,202	$38

Amount based on sample of $20,000
Sample for joint life annuity (payable as long as either person is alive)

Male 75 & Female 75	5.59% $1,118	$4,889	$1,045	$73

Call or fax for an explanatory brochure and/or confidential no-obligation quotation.
Phone: 416-410-4244 I Fax: 416-465-6367 I www.linkcharity.ca

LinkCharity Canada Inc.
1-800-387-8146 I 45 Harriet St, **TORONTO**, ON M4L 2G1

Job Opportunities

Are you our answer to prayer?
Duncan CRC on Vancouver Island,
British Columbia is seeking an

Associate Pastor of Congregational Life

If you are enthusiastic about helping others discover their gifts, facilitating church programs, building relationships and preaching occasionally ... the Spirit may be calling you to work alongside our senior pastor.

Innovative and energetic persons to apply to:
Duncan CRC Attn: Bill Wikkerink
930 Trunk Rd, Duncan BC V9L 2S1
or call 250-748-2122
or email: crc.duncan@shawcable.com

Senior High English Language Arts Teacher

Immanuel Christian High School
Lethbridge, Alberta

This permanent, full-time position involves teaching English Language Arts and Drama at the grade 10 to 12 levels. We are looking for somebody who is passionate and excited about teaching English Language Arts and who can take a leadership role in strengthening and enhancing the Language Arts program at our campus.

This position is available for a start date of January 2010 but may remain available for September 2010 if no suitable candidate is found. Interested applicants are asked to apply by sending a detailed resume, Statement of Faith and Philosophy of Christian Education, and a pastor's reference to:

Rob vanSpronsen, Principal
Immanuel Christian High School
802 - 6th Avenue North Lethbridge AB T1H 0S1
email: RvanSpronsen@immanuelcs.ca
fax: (403) 327-6333
phone: (403) 328-4783

We thank all who apply, however only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

Advertising

wbm

Wallaceburg Bookbinding
& MFG. CO. LTD.

We Bind, Rebind and Restore

Save money– Don't buy replacements!

Churches: Send us one of your hymnals as a sample and we will rebind it at no cost. *Normal price for quantities of five or more- $8.75*

Personal Orders: We will bind short run editions e.g. family histories as well as rebinding and restoring personal books.

1-800-214-2463 FAX (519)627-6922
95 Arnold St. Wallaceburg ON N8A 3P3 http://wbmbindery.com

De Nederlandse COURANT

North America's oldest and most published Dutch language paper and exclusive aftermarket distributor of the Libelle and Margriet magazines in its 55th year of publication.

SPECIAL NEW SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

De Nederlandse COURANT: ❑ 1 year $15.00 (regular $33.00)
❑ 2 years $40.00 (regular $62.50)

❑ Margriet or ❑ Libelle with De Nederlandse COURANT:
❑ 1 year $125.00 (regular $160.00)
❑ 2 years $220.00 (regular $280.00)

Name:______________________
Address:______________________
City:______________ **Code:**______________
Phone:______________ **E-Mail:**______________

Mail coupon with your cheque to:
De Nederlandse COURANT
2110 Hunt Crescent, Burlington ON L7M 2N9

Elim Investment Opportunities

Bonds
Available @ Prime

Promissory Notes
Available @ Prime plus1%

This is not to be construed as an offer to solicit investments and no investment can be made until the investor has received an Information Statement issued by Elim Housing Society.

Established by the Elim Housing Society in 1995, Elim Village is located on 20 acres in the heart of Surrey's Fleetwood area. Based and operated on Christian principles, Elim's vision is to provide various levels of quality care for seniors.

Today, over 400 people call Elim home and are able to enjoy the benefits of living within a caring Christian retirement community. As part of Elim's ongoing successful financial strategy, we offer a variety of investment opportunities. Our rates are determined by the Royal Bank of Canada's prime rate.

We currently offer **Royal Bank of Canada's prime plus 1%** (not to exceed 7%)

On Sept. 29, 2009 Elim Investments were accruing interest at **3.25%**

ELIM Village

For more information regarding investment with Elim Village, contact **Terry-Lynn Dryfhout** at **tld@elimvillage.com** or call **604.583.3546 Ext 4031**
Visit our website at **www.ElimVillage.com**

A Christian Retirement Community

Put our experience to work for you.

THE KLOET SCHURINGA TEAM RE/MAX

Outstanding agents. Outstanding results.

Lifetime Achievement Award · RE/MAX Platinum Award · Hall of Fame · Hall of Fame

George Kloet
Sales Representative
gkloet@trebnet.com
www.georgekloet.com

Pauline Schuringa
Sales Representative
pschuringa@trebnet.com
www.paulineschuringa.com

RE/MAX Realty Enterprises Inc., Brokerage
1697 Lakeshore Road West
Mississauga, ON L5J 1J4
Tel.905.855.2200

BUSINESS AND SERVICE **DIRECTORY**

MERRITT FUNERAL HOME
287 Station St.
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0
Serving Families for 4 Generations
Director: **Thomas C Merritt**
Fax 905-957-1371 Ph: **905-957-7031**
Website: www.merritt-fh.com FSAC

Winter Bookkeeping & Tax Service
4184 Mountain St.
P.O. Box 844
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0
Ph: 905-563-4471
Fax: 905-563-4696
Email: wbts@bellnet.ca

MEESTER INSURANCE
Smithville, Ont.
Phone:
905-957-2333
or
1-800-465-8256
www.meesterinsurance.com
MEESTER INSURANCE CENTRE · AGRI-BUSINESS SPECIALIST

JERRY'S AUTO BODY
(Beamsville) Inc.
Serving Beamsville and area since 1969
• Complete Collision Repairs
• Quality Refinishing
Jerry Gerritsen 5529 Regional Rd. #81
Alan Gerritsen Beamsville ON L0R 1B3
Phone/Fax: **905-563-7702**

Digital Art & Graphics INC.
DESIGN • PRINT • IMAGING
578 Upper James St.
Hamilton, ON L9C 2Y6
For all your printing needs
Call Brian or Kathie Bezemer at:
1-800-247-0155 or **905-574-0822**
Email: bezemer@digitalartandgraphics.com

BAKKER
BARRISTER & SOLICITOR
1 Keefer Road
St. Catharines, Ontario L2M 6K4
Email: bert@bakkerlaw.ca
East of Lock 1 - on site parking
905-688-9352
Albert J Bakker

R. HAALBOOM, Q.C.
Barrister Solicitor Notary
Richard Rijk Haalboom, Q.C., B.A., J.D
7 Duke St. West **Ph: 519-579-2920**
Suite 304 **Fax: 519-576-0471**
Kitchener, Ontario N2H 6N7
E-mail: richard@haalboom.ca

Tax Free Savings Account (TFSA)
Now available.
Call for an application.
CRC Extension Fund
416-461-1207

Events/Advertising

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Oct 17 Diaconal ministries hosts the 'Day of Encouragement' featuring Michael Card at Redeemer College, **Ancaster**. See ad.

Oct. 17 Leendert Kooij and the OCMA choir, Quartet and Brass do a "Benefit concert," for Eurovangelism. At Hebron C.R. Church, 4240 Anderson St. Whitby 7:30 pm. Special offering for missions.

Oct 18 Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church in **Bowmanville**, Ontario celebrating 60 years with a service at 6:30 pm. For further information call Chris in the church office at 905-623-5032 or rehobothcrc@bellnet.ca

Oct 23 Ambassadors Celebration. 40 years. Calvin Christian School, **Hamilton**, ON. Call 905-389-2104 to reserve.

Oct 24 Hamilton Young Adult reunion for Young Adults of the late 70s and early 80s. Theme Find Us Faithful. Time 9:00 a.m. til 4:00 p.m. at Mountainview CRC, **Grimsby.** Visit our website http://youngadults.myevent.com for details or call Jake Ellens at 519-448-4321or email hamiltonyoungadult@yahoo.ca.

Oct 24 Leendert Kooij and the OCMA choir, Quartet and Brass do a "Benefit Concert," for Eurovangelism. At St. George's Anglican Church, 99 Woolwich St, Guelph, 7:30. Special offering for missions.

Oct 26 Seniors Day at Redeemer Universiry College, Ancaster. Registration starts at 9:30 am. See ad Sep 28 issue for details or see www.christiancourier.ca and click on events.

Nov 20 Christian Festival Concert at 7:30 p.m. at the Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto. Call 416-636-9779 or email landmkooy@rogers.com See Ad.

Nov. 21, 22 Immanuel CRC, **Hamilton**, ON, 50th anniversary. See ad this page or go to www.immanuelministries.ca

Nov 27 The Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools (OACS) invites you to the retirement dinner and celebration for Dr. Adriaan Guldemond at Kings Christian Collegiate, Oakville, ON. RSVP by Nov.13. Contact Samantha at 905-648-2100 or samanthab@oacs.org.

2010

June 26, 27 Come celebrate the 50th anniversary of HCCS (formerly Athens Christian School). Contact us at www.hccs.ca or 613 498 4176.

1969 - 2009

Come celebrate with the Ambassadors

40 YEARS OF SINGING TOGETHER!

Inviting everyone and especially former singers

Friday, October 23, 2009 — 7:30 PM

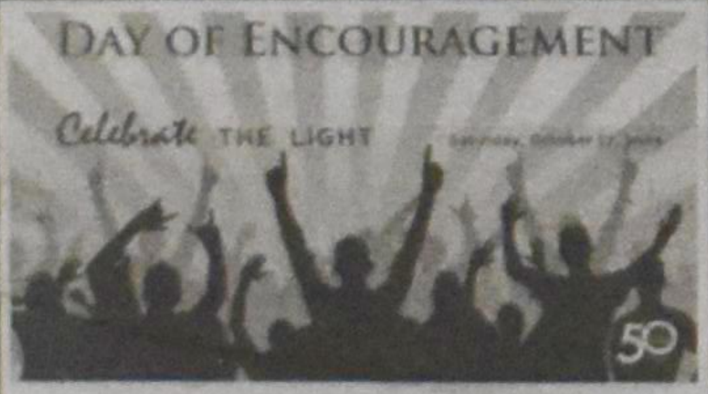
Celebration Program

Debbie Braun—harp
Carolyn Zeyl—flute
Laura Pin—piano
Michael Pin—clarinet
Marsha Heeg—piano
Video program
Ambassadors in song
Audience singing

Wine, cheese, relish trays, cake, coffee

Calvin Christian School
547 West 5th Street, Hamilton, ON

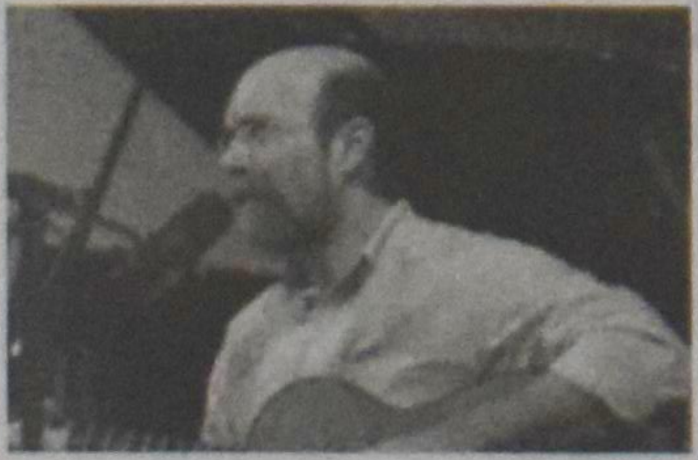
TICKETS: $20.00 per person – ($160 per table)
CALL 905.389.2104 to reserve your ticket/table
or contact a choir member.



Day of Encouragement

Date: October 17, 2009
Location: Redeemer University College, Ancaster, ON

The 'Day of Encouragement' features 40 excellent workshops on a variety of topics like caring with boundaries, mentoring, leadership and community ministry.
Visit our website for more information – www.diaconalministries.com



In celebration of our 50th Day of Encouragement, join us for a special concert with Michael Card at 3:00 p.m. Michael Card is a Dove-award winning singer and songwriter. He has recorded more than 20 albums including # 1 hits such as "El Shaddai" and "Immanuel." See www.michaelcard.com

IMMANUEL CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
Hamilton ON
invites former members and friends
to its **50th anniversary celebrations**
Open House and Dinner on November 21, 2009
and a
Celebration Service on November 22. 2009
See www.immanuelministries.ca for further information

Ontario Christian Music Assembly

Leendert Kooij, Director

Special guests include:
Igor Emelianov, Liselotte Rokyta, Andre Knevel, Beatrice Carpino, Melissa Venema, Adolfo De Santis, OCMA Vocal Quartet.
A variety of great Christian Music, inspiring gospel songs, exciting Choruses

Christian Festival Concert

Friday, November 20, 2009 - 7:30 p.m.
Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto
Order tickets from:
Ontario Christian Music Assembly
90 Topcliff Ave
Downsview ON M3N 1L8

Tickets:
$30.00
$22.00
$16.00

TEL: **416-636-9779** Email: landmkooy@rogers.com

A **charitable** gift **annuity** offers:

REDEEMER UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

- the peace of mind of a guaranteed lifetime income, largely tax free
- the satisfaction of knowing that you will be providing a future gift for Redeemer University College

Blended rate of 6 - 10% (capital returned & interest) for those over 65.
Please contact us for your own confidential, no-obligation quote.
Information available on other gift-planning options as well.

Christian Stewardship Services

Redeemer University College 777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, Ontario L9K 1J4
905.648.2139 x4522 (James) stewardship@redeemer.ca

Hamilton Young Adults Reunion

If you were a Hamilton Young Adult of the late 70s and early 80s, here's your chance to get together and relive some of those youthful memories. We can pretend for a day that we're still young and tell each other that we haven't changed a bit. Of course, there'll also be room for honesty and the truth. And singing!

A Reunion based on the theme
Find Us Faithful
Saturday October 24, 2009 from 9:00 a.m. til 4:00 p.m.
at Mountainview CRC, Grimsby.

Visit our website http://youngadults.myevent.com for details or call Jake Ellens at 519-448-4321 or email hamiltonyoungadult@yahoo.ca
Please send your registration a.s.a.p.

UNIGLOBE DCA Travel & Cruise

Visit us at:
www.uniglobedcatravel.com
info@uniglobedcatravel.com
TORONTO: 416-224-5211
1-800-667-2525
Canada wide - ticket home delivery

TRAVEL INSURANCE - HEALTH/CANCELLATION/COMPREHENSIVE

Europe on Sale
7 NIGHT PACKAGES INC AIR/HOTEL/TRANSFERS
September departures

FRANCE - PARIS
from **$1089** taxes **$342** (inc. breakfast)
SPAIN - COSTA DEL SOL
from **$1039** taxes **$294** (kitchenette)
ENGLAND - LONDON
from **$699** taxes **$387** (inc. breakfast)
ITALY - ROME COAST
from **$949** taxes **$302** (2 meals daily)
GREECE - KINETTA BEACH
from **$1198** taxes **$336** (all inclusive)

AMSTERDAM
KLM/ AIR TRANSAT
KLM air transat
October departures
From CA **$571**
inc. taxes, plus service fees

This is your Travel Centre for all your Travel Needs!!! On. Reg. 01495998

MARANATHA HOMES

Living **independently** in Christian **community**

MARANATHA HOMES, located in south Burlington near many amenities, is a place where Christian seniors can enjoy independent living in community with others.

- Reasonable rent rates at $753 per month
- Newly renovated units
- Award winning architectural design
- Well maintained building and grounds
- No condo fees or utility bills

All this and more make Maranatha Homes an attractive and affordable accommodation for seniors.

For further information contact: Rosanne van der Woerd
109-3260 New St. Burlington ON L7N 3L4
905-681-0311 Email: rvanderwoerd@sympatico.ca

News

Adoption: a new kind of love story

Toronto International Film Festival 2009

Jennifer McNaughton

Mother and Child, written and directed by Rodrigo Garcia, is the story of three women who each live a different experience of adoption. Karen (Annette Bening) gave her daughter up for adoption 37 years ago, at the age of 14; Elizabeth (Naomi Watts) is herself a grown adopted child; and Lucy (Kerry Washington) is unable to have children and trying to adopt. The film introduces us to each character – in the mess and midst of her life and relationships – before weaving the stories together.

We see a middle-aged, unmarried Karen working as a physiotherapist, abrupt and defensive with practically everyone except her elderly mother with whom she lives. She is plagued by incessant questions about her daughter's life and whereabouts. Elizabeth is an attorney obsessed with success, and accustomed to iron-clad control over her career, emotions and sex life. She eschews tenderness and deadens emotion to avoid any disappointment. Kerry is a baker who feels equal pressure from her husband, her mother-in-law, and herself to conceive. Out of desperation she turns her efforts to adoption, and finds a new *raison d'etre*.

Karen (Annette Bening) becomes a second mother to Cristi, the daughter of her housekeeper Sofia (Elpidia Carrillo).

Elizabeth (Naomi Watts) works her charm on Paul (Samuel L. Jackson).

Past brokenness to joy

Characterized by strong performances across the board, the film is full of moments both hilarious and heartbreaking. It is an untold relief when Karen, in all her awkwardness, finally warms to the support and patience of a new co-worker named Paco (Jimmy Smits); it is conversely devastating when Elizabeth seduces her new boss (Samuel L. Jackson) and her married neighbour (Marc Blucas) at the same time, and for different reasons. We soon learn to long for the rescue of these women, who live marooned by other people's choices and by their own self-destructive habits.

Garcia himself mentioned the idea of longing in his remarks after a festival screening of *Mother and Child* at Toronto's Winter Garden Theatre: "Adoption is a love story – it can be wonderful, problematic, disastrous. I was curious about two people who are separated, and who long for each other." As the title suggests, the film explores the endurance of the bond between the nurturer and the nurtured, even when the two are separated for a lifetime. Even in absence, the roles evolve until they naturally reverse: the nurturer reaches out to be nurtured, and the child becomes the parent.

Not for the faint of heart, *Mother and Child* wades right in to its characters' brokenness. This unflinching portrait, however, is the very quality that allows us to share in their joy on the other side – in moments however belated or fleeting. A journey of acceptance, *Mother and Child* chronicles three lives of revelation – painful, messy, rewarding and rich.

Jennifer McNaughton is a bilingual actress living in Toronto. On the side, she coaches customer service and communication skills. She likes cycling and eating rotis, and adores her five year old niece, Nadya.

Now presenting . . . global controversy

Politics colour Toronto International Film Festival

Angela Reitsma Bick

Instead of international art, moviegoers at Toronto's International Film Festival (TIFF) got a taste of international politics. TIFF, a world-renowned festival, introduced a new element this year called *City to City* – a spotlight for "the best documentary and fiction films from and about a selected city." Festival organizers chose Tel Aviv, which celebrates its 100th birthday this year.

The choice angered filmmakers and actors who equate the celebration of an Israeli city with the suppression of Palestinian voices. Canadian filmmaker John Greyson withdrew his latest documentary in protest, and drafted a letter stating his concerns. The Toronto Declaration, as the open letter became known, objected "to the use of such an important international festival in staging a propaganda campaign," – the propaganda being Israel's attempt to improve its image ("brand Israel") globally. The Declaration was signed by over 65 well-known cultural figures, including actors Jane Fonda and Viggo Mortensen, and writers Naomi Klein and Alice Walker.

The festival directors, however, stood by their decision. "We recognize that Tel Aviv is not a simple choice," wrote Cameron Bailey, co-director of TIFF. A statement issued by TIFF made it clear that ten Israeli films included were meant to stimulate discussion as "work that deals with today's issues."

Israelis around the world are divided on how events unfolded in Toronto. Some worried that this was the latest instance of the cultural boycott of Israel called for by more than 100 Palestinian organizations in 2005. A Rabbi writing in the *Toronto Sun* thought the Declaration was "a new low blow aimed at Israel's heart and soul." Others, including some Israeli filmmakers, actually signed it. One Israeli writer, Udi Aloni, said "I felt it was a betrayal for the film community or festival to celebrate the oppressor, as opposed to highlighting the lives of the oppressed." In an interview with Al Jazeera English, Aloni added, "If the Palestinians ask us to follow a cultural boycott of Israel, while they remain voiceless, then it is our obligation to do it."

Sudoku 9x9 - Medium (133513122) www.sudoku-puzzles.net

	1		3			7	5	
5				7		4		8
4				5				
	9	5			2		6	
				8				
	3		4			8	2	
				1				2
1		7		6				9
	6	9			3		7	

Odds and Trends

What's in a name?

This summer, the New Democratic Party (NDP) contemplated adopting a new name, hoping to change the image of Canada's oldest and most successful socialist party. The NDP leader, Jack Layton, wanted to simply take "new" out of the party's tag.

One objection was that in Quebec, the party would then be known as the "Parti Democratic" or "PD." In that province, "pede" is a derogatory term for homosexuals. Thus, the name is hardly appropriate for a party that has maintained a reputation as one of Canada's most gay-friendly political organizations.

As branding expert Glenda Rissman said, "Pede is not a great word. It's just going to create negative press." She added that the party needed to determine if the name made a good acronym and if the party could purchase a website to match the new title.

Others believe the current name hurts the party at the polls. Jim Bickerton, a political science professor from Antgonish, Nova Scotia, notes that "if the party is perennially the new party, then they never get to be perceived as one of the established alternatives." The truth is that the party has a great deal of history behind it.

The NDP can trace it roots back to 1932, when a group of socialist and labour union supporters met in Calgary and formed the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. In 1961, party members agreed that the old CCF name was cumbersome and voted to style themselves the New Democratic Party. Since the party has been a part of Canadian politics for so long, voters are familiar with it and its core policies. As one pundit put it: "People know the NDP." Unfortunately, the NDP is known primarily for finishing third place or worse in most federal elections.

Garry Doer, the Premier of Manitoba who has led the NDP to three majority governments in the province, advised against the proposed name change. "The public think sometimes all of us in partisan politics are only doing things for advantage of votes for ourselves, rather then making a difference and having change for people."

Most Canadians would probably agree. After all, another election may be looming, and Canada's economy, federal pension plan, employment insurance program and health care system are all in crisis. In times like these, all parties should focus on creative solutions to real problems, rather than on issues of branding and image.

Harold Alkema, *guest columnist*